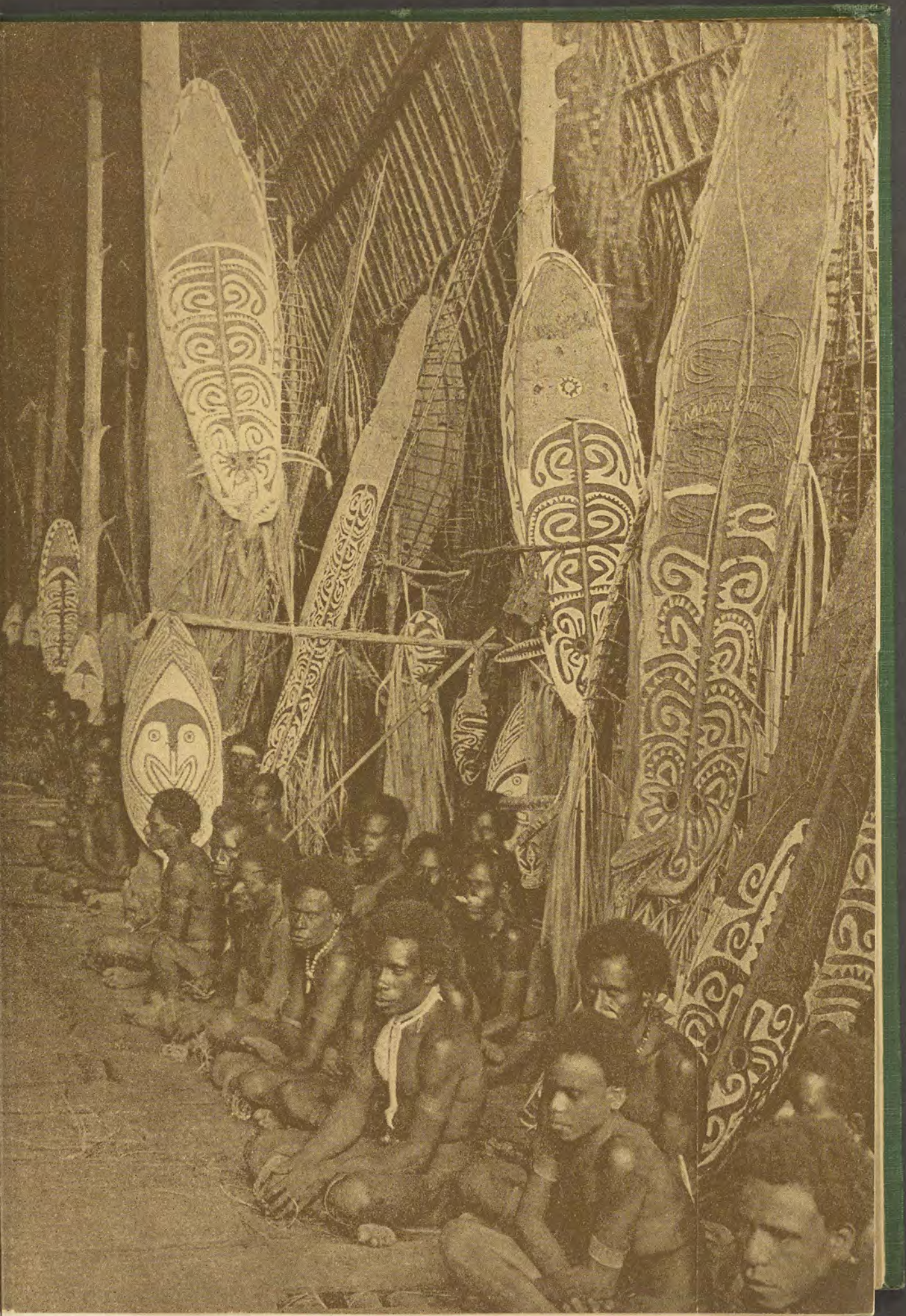
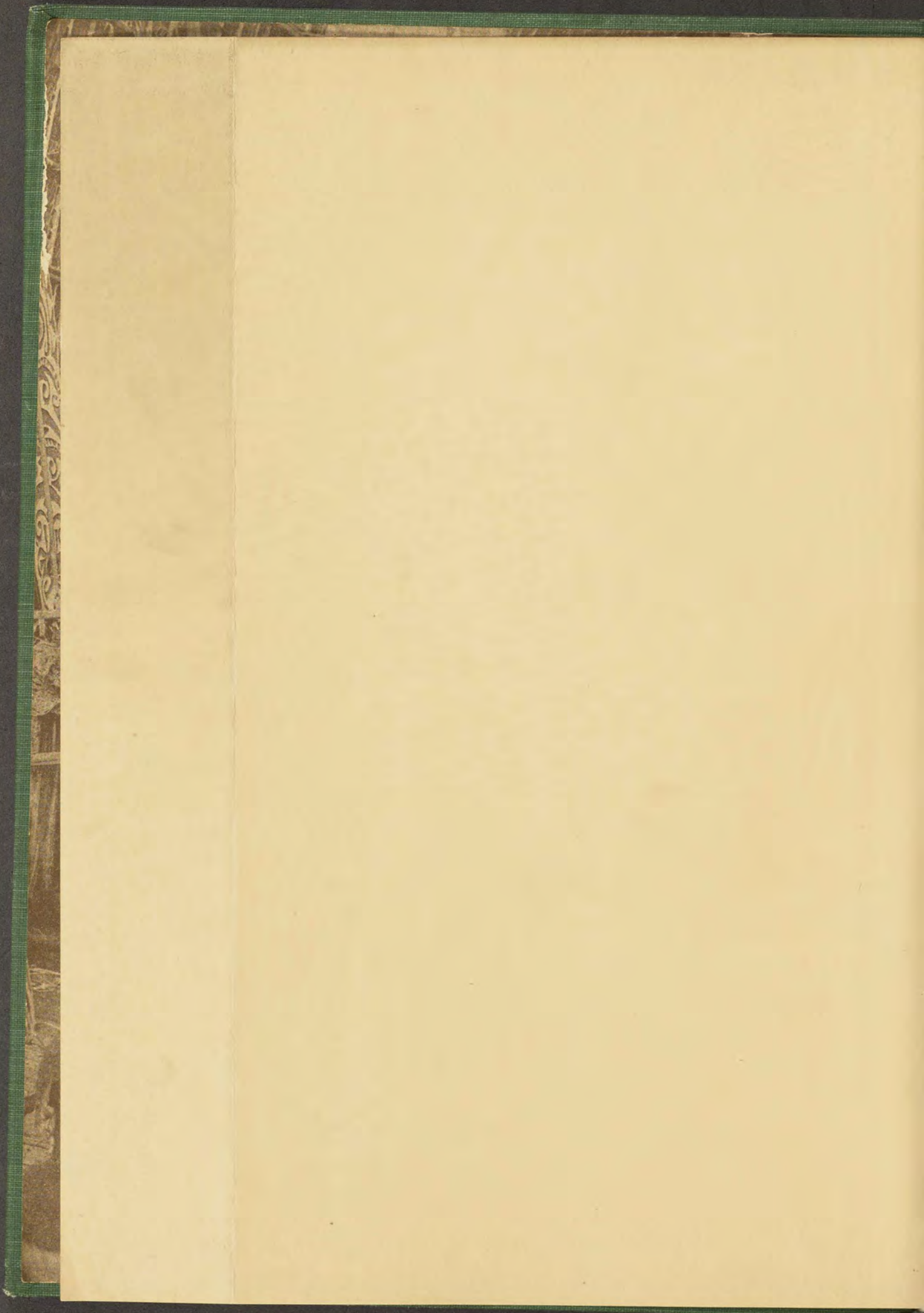


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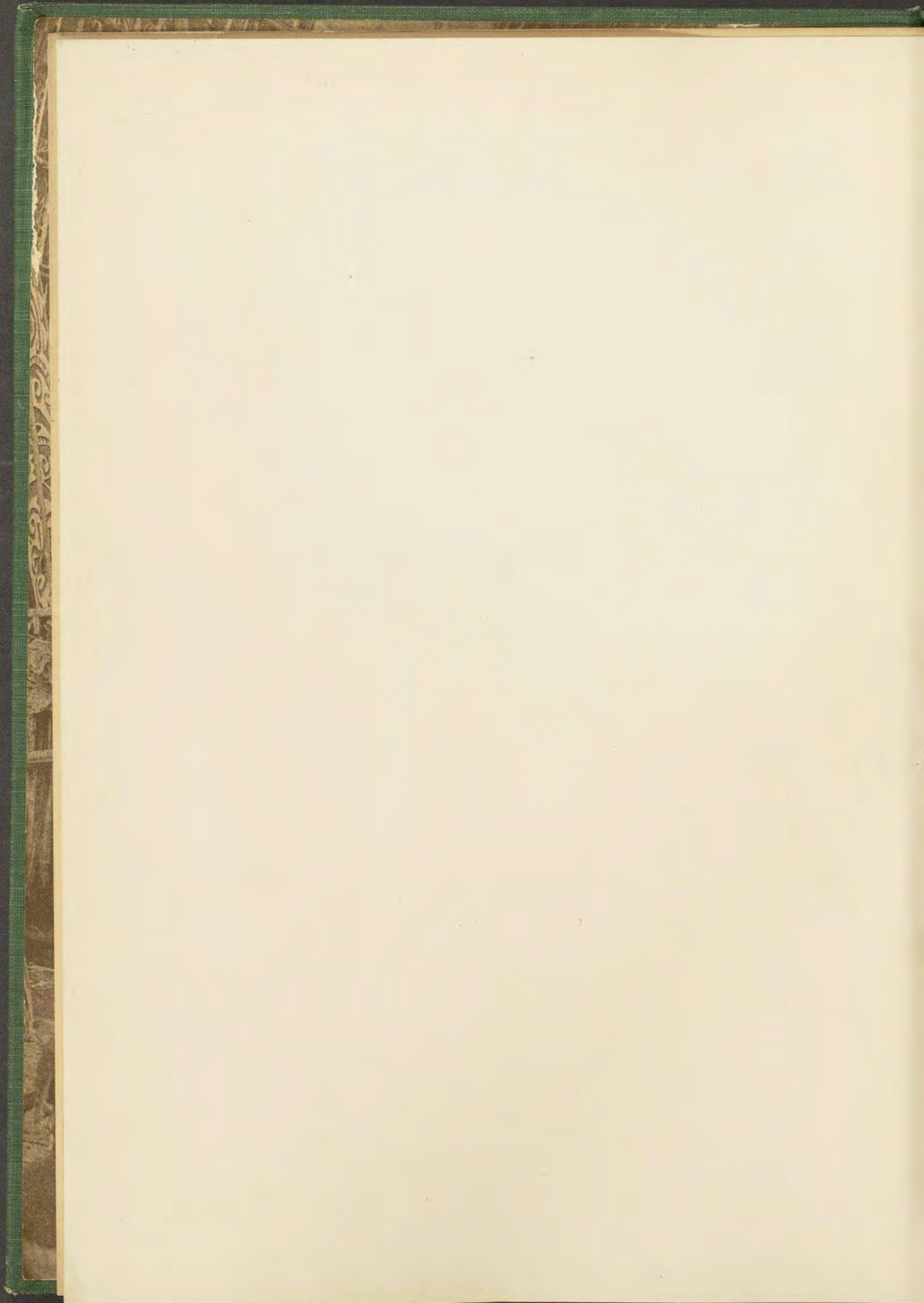
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FRANK HURLEY

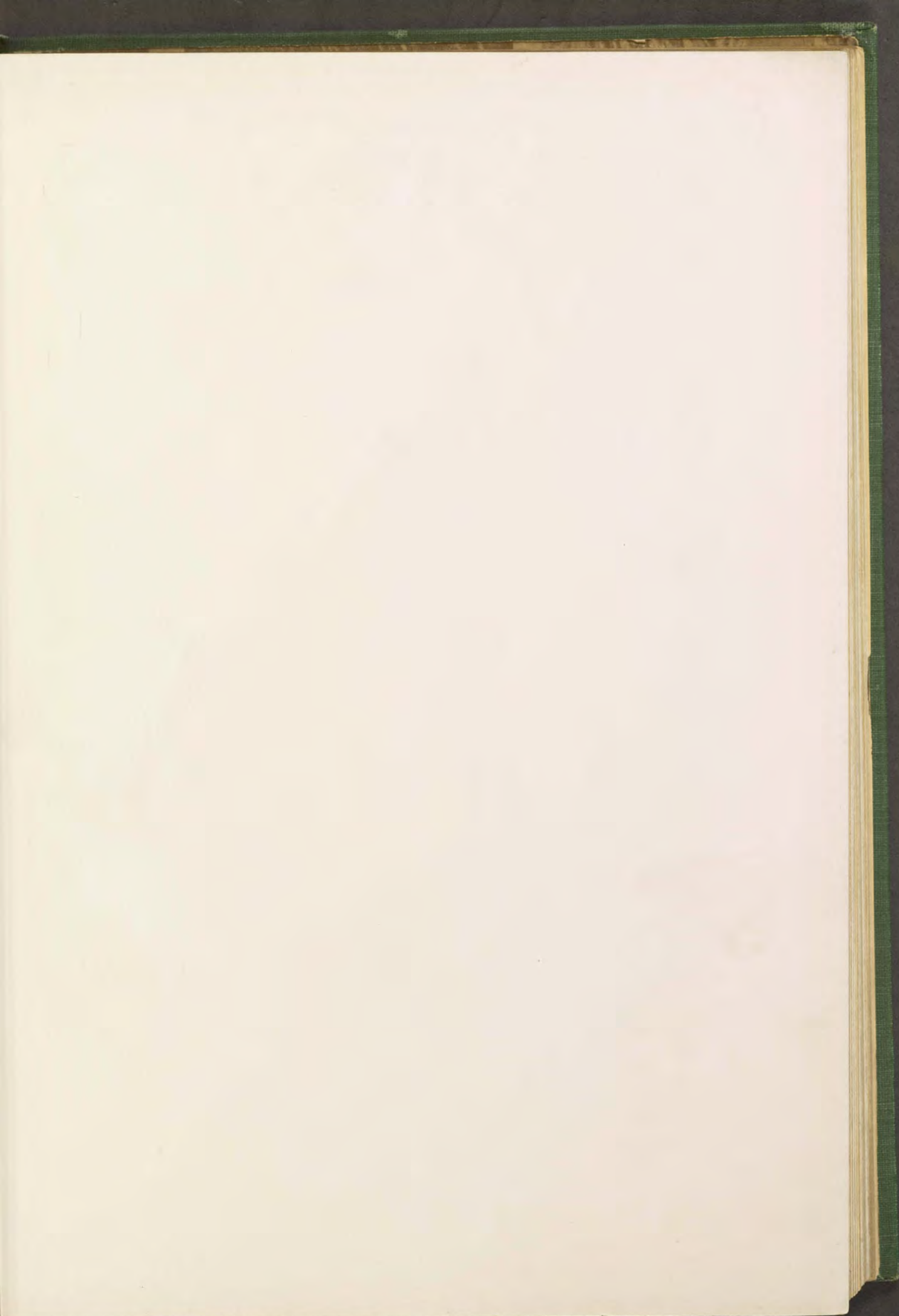


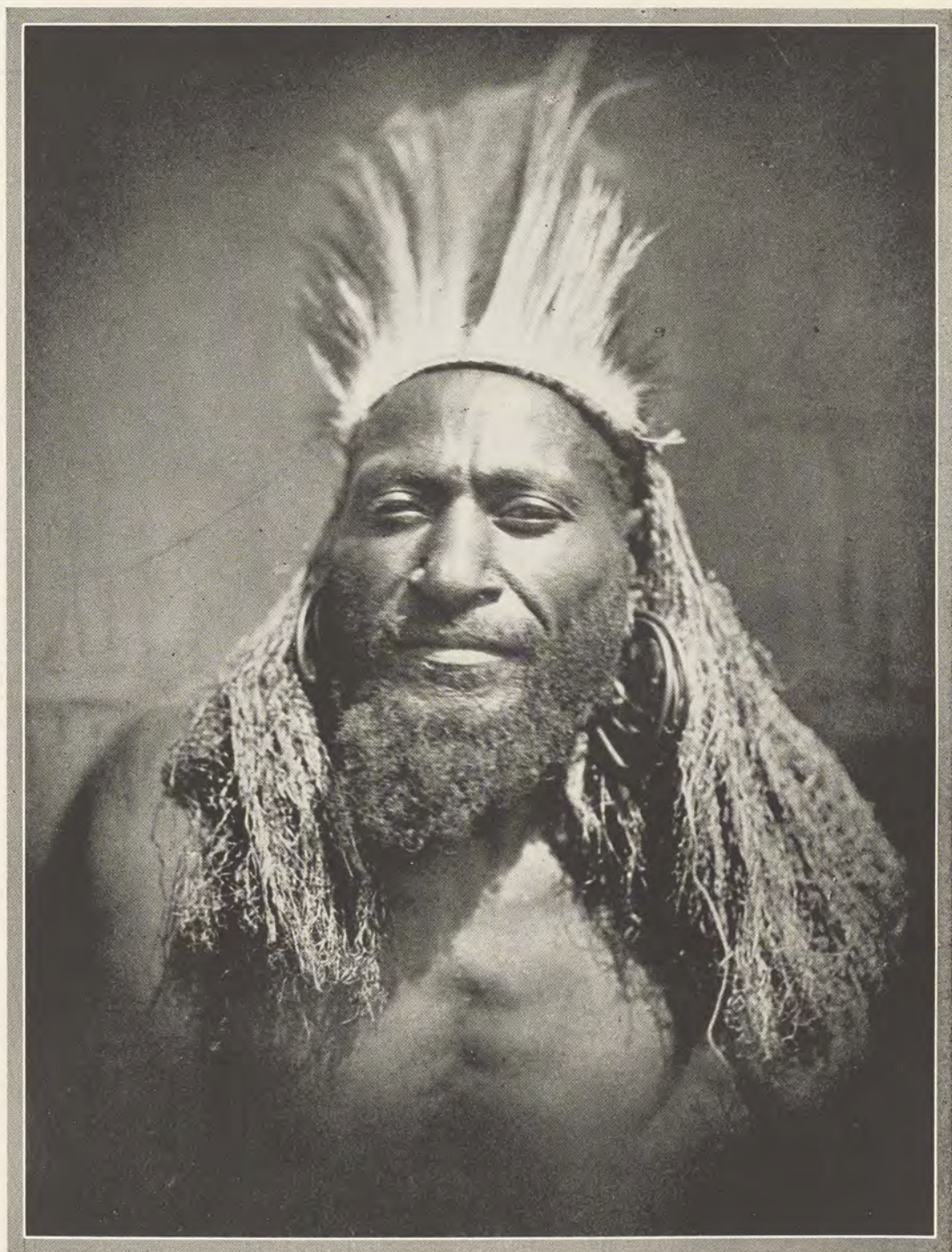




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HAMOJI, CHIEF OF THE SAMBIO TRIBE WHICH THE HURLEY PARTY DISCOVERED IN THE TROPICAL WILDERNESS ABOUT LAKE MURRAY. THE SEMITIC CAST OF FEATURE IN THIS STONE AGE CHIEFTAIN WAS STRONGLY MARKED AND REPEATED ITSELF IN THE FACES OF ALL HIS WARRIORS. THE SAME STRIKING FEATURAL CHARACTERISTICS APPEAR SPORADICALLY AMONG SOME OF THE COASTAL TRIBES. AMONG THE SAMBIOS IT WAS VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL AND GAVE DIGNITY AND PRESENCE TO THE PERSONALITIES OF THE CANNIBALS

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

Adventures in the Air
on Land and Sea—
in New Guinea

by
Capt. Frank Hurley

with eighty
illustrations



G.P. Putnam's Sons

New York

1924

LONDON



HAMON, CHIEF OF THE SAMHO TRIBE, WHICH THE BUREAU PARTY DISCOVERED IN THE YEAR 1880, NEAR ABOUT LAKE MURRAY. THE SEMITE CAST OF FEATURES IN THIS SPECIES OF MAN, AND THE SYMMETRY MARKED AND REPEATED ITSELF IN THE FAIRER AND MORE WARMLY FACED. FINE FACIAL CHARACTERISTICS APPEAR SPORADICALLY AMONG SOME OF THE TRIBES, BUT IN THE SAMHO IT WAS VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL AND GAVE DIGNITY AND PRESTIGE TO THE CHIEFS OF THE CANNIBALS.

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Made in the United States of America

FOREWORD

Now and then there appears out of the confusion of our complex and noisy civilization a being seemingly strayed from some more romantic day when galleons sailed the blue Caribbean and Marco Polo, moved by a great curiosity, set out on his adventurous journey to Cathay. In an age when human effort so largely tends toward making life a communal and unindividualistic affair, the figure of a man who desires solitude and the experience of penetrating an unexplored country, stands forth unique and somewhat incongruous.

Such a one is Captain Frank Hurley, of Australia.

During the course of his thirty-four years, Frank Hurley ranged from France to Australia, from the southernmost tip of the earth to the equator, from the savage heart of New Guinea to the lecture platforms of New York. His earliest adventures led him at a youthful age into the unexplored regions of Australia. In 1911 he accompanied Sir Douglas Mawson into the Antarctic and after that took part in the Mawson Relief Expedition. A little later, while wandering among the bushmen of Australia, a cable reached him from Sir Ernest Shackleton asking him to join the latter's expedition to the Pole.

It was during this voyage that Captain Hurley with a handful of companions sat by and watched their ship crushed

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into kindling wood by the ice. For months they lived on the ice floe until they made their way at last to Elephant Island where the next seven months were spent beneath an overturned boat, with the dim prospect of rescue ever in the background.

"It was under that boat," says the Captain, "that the idea of exploring New Guinea was born. At night we went to sleep hungry to dream of delicious banquets. Likewise we went to bed cold and dreamed of a country so hot that the water steamed. Believe me, I am a firm supporter of the wish-fulfillment theory. I know that under conditions like those, you dream of the things that are the most impossible and the furthest from hope.

"In the daytime, we talked of nothing but the tropics and the palm trees and while the wind blew ninety miles an hour and the snow covered our shelter, our party planned an expedition into New Guinea the moment we were rescued."

The expedition, however, was destined never to materialize as originally planned. When at last rescue ended the weary months, the little band came back to civilization to find that all Europe was at war and more than a million men had already been killed.

Hurley and his companions joined up. He became the official photographer of the Australian Expeditionary Forces, and in the trenches and in the air, made a pictorial record of unique value. He served in France and Flanders and later with Allenby's army in Palestine.

When the war ended, the hope of regathering the group together for the New Guinea expedition proved tragically impossible. Some of the men were dead, others crippled or ill. Out of the lot one remained completely unimpaired. It was Frank Hurley. He resolved to make the trip alone.

In the end, he set out with a party of natives and five

FOREWORD

white men, including Alan McCulloch, ichthyologist of the Australian Museum, "a fellow who is the salt of the earth and enjoyed excitement and the wilderness as much as myself," says Hurley.

The land Captain Hurley sought to penetrate is the largest unexplored area on the earth, excepting only the Antarctic wastes. It is largely a region of mountain fastnesses and gigantic swamps, with here and there a lake whose water reaches ninety degrees, while one hundred is about the atmospheric minimum. In this country dwell men who belong to the Stone Age, cannibalistic, head-hunting.

Among the expedition's discoveries none, perhaps, is more interesting than the finding of primitive types far in the interior who have a strikingly Semitic cast of features. Captain Hurley brought back many photographs of those inhabitants of the vast steaming swamp about Lake Murray, among them types who might have served as models for the Assyrian and Phœnician kings who lived before Christ. Strangely enough the method of dressing the hair in tight and conventional curls makes the likeness even more striking. There is a theory among the residents of Papua that the Semitic strain may have been introduced by legendary shipwrecked mariners of Jewish or Moorish origin who were stranded in New Guinea when the Spanish galleons sank on the coral reefs of Torres Straits. Fragments of copper bolts and old Spanish coins are still brought to the surface from time to time by the Papuan pearl divers and *bêche-de-mer* fishermen. At all events, it was the discovery of these people which led Captain Hurley to call his really remarkable motion picture film "The Lost Tribe."

In "Pearls and Savages" Captain Hurley has set down the vivid record of these alluring New Guinea explorations. Its text is calculated to appeal to everyone of us for whom

FOREWORD

the story of modern adventure holds any measure of interest, while I venture to believe the rare beauty of its pictorial material, thanks to Hurley's superlative photography, stands unequalled.

G. P. P.

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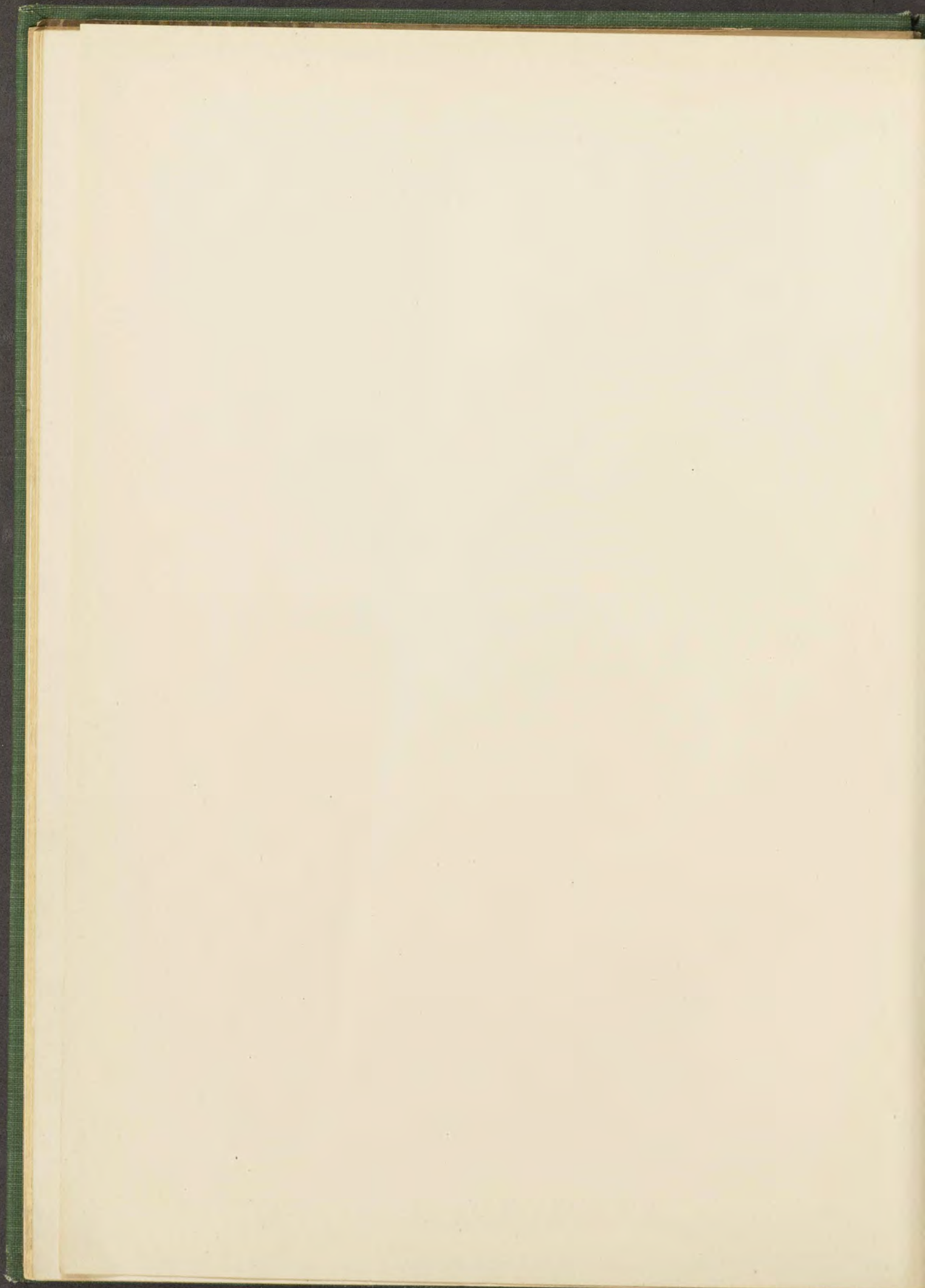
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CHAPTER I

A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

PAPUA AND THE TORRES STRAITS



CHAPTER I

1

BENEATH two overturned boats on a blizzard-swept Antarctic rock, a handful of shipwrecked castaways of the late Sir Ernest Shackleton's South Polar expedition eked out a miserable existence while living constantly in the expectation of relief. Seventeen months previously we had forced a passage through the ice-armored wastes of the Weddell Sea aboard the *Endurance*, only to be gripped and held captive when the ice fields closed and slowly congealed. After eleven months of frozen captivity, our ship was crushed by the pressure of the ice and sank beneath the frozen sea. Then followed six months of drifting upon the ice floes, months of peril and privation, dogged constantly by starvation and hunger. When the ice floes eventually reached the open ocean, we launched three small boats and through the crashing, grinding pack ice effected a miraculous escape to the storm harassed shores of Elephant Island.

During the months of seeming eternity that we were marooned on this desolate rock ledge, the burden of life was somewhat ameliorated by our dreams of home and sunnier climes. Crouched beneath the overturned boats, seeking shelter from the ceaseless blizzards, our shivering, half-starved bodies sensed a glow of warmth from conversations which strayed invariably toward equatorial latitudes. Our thoughts

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

centered upon the vast mystery island, New Guinea, a land shrouded by impenetrable jungles, ribbed with mountains and inhabited by savages, which holds the most extensive virgin tracts untrodden by white men outside of the Polar regions. These conversational rambles became the nucleus about which the plans of an expedition gradually matured, the formulation of which gave wing to many a weary hour. A coterie of kindred spirits of which I was one, vowed that should we ever escape from our frigid imprisonment, we would forthwith embark upon a thawing out enterprise into the wilds of New Guinea.

When at last the tedium of our wretched plight was alleviated by relief, we were transported back to civilization and war. To a man we turned from the white warfare of the Antarctic to the grim, red fields of France and Flanders. My comrades joined their various regiments and I was given the post of official war photographer to the Australian Imperial Forces. When the armistice brought peace, the little coterie of kindred spirits was so decimated or scattered that I was forced to return to my homeland, Australia, with the determination to continue alone. I decided to make my first visit to New Guinea a reconnaissance for a later and more extensive scientific expedition and to become thoroughly conversant with tropical conditions and native affairs.

These preliminary wanderings were confined to the isles of the coral seas north of Australia and the littoral of the territory known as Papua, a dependency of the Australian Commonwealth embracing some ninety thousand square miles. Excluding the extensive tracts of western Papua which remains virtually a *terra incognita*, where the native population is slowly coming under the influence of the Administration and gradually, through a process of passive subjugation, is passing from crude barbarity into a state of pseudo-civilization.

A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

After journeyings which covered a period of ten months, I returned to Sydney, Australia, where I placed a motion picture record of the expedition before the Australian public. The warm-hearted response and the success of the presentation not only urged me on to the greater ambition I had in mind, but also provided the necessary funds to carry my plans to fruition.

I proposed to concentrate the energies of the second expedition upon the regions of western Papua which, beyond the coastal stretches and river banks, is still the lawless realm of cannibalism. To facilitate the exploration of the swampy hinterlands, the dense jungles and the lakes of the interior, I decided to employ seaplanes. Mr. Lebbeus Hordern, of Sydney, a benefactor in the cause of science and aviation, placed at my disposal two seaplanes and rendered the project possible.

Naturally an element of uncertainty entered into this pioneering aerial work, as no machine had ever flown these skies before; and not only were atmospheric conditions turbulent and unfavorable but still more hazardous was the situation likely to be found inland where landing places were problematical, and if a forced descent was made, the possibility of rescue or escape through swamps inhabited only by savage peoples was remote. The main incentives for exploring the interior were: (1) discovery and map making by aerial survey (2) ethnological and zoo'ological study and the collecting of specimens for the Australian Museum, (3) motion pictures and still photographic records of natives, customs and scenes.

I secured an auxiliary, light-draught vessel constructed specially for navigating shallow waterways, and equipped her with the required scientific equipment and a powerful radio. Throughout our venturings we were able to maintain

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

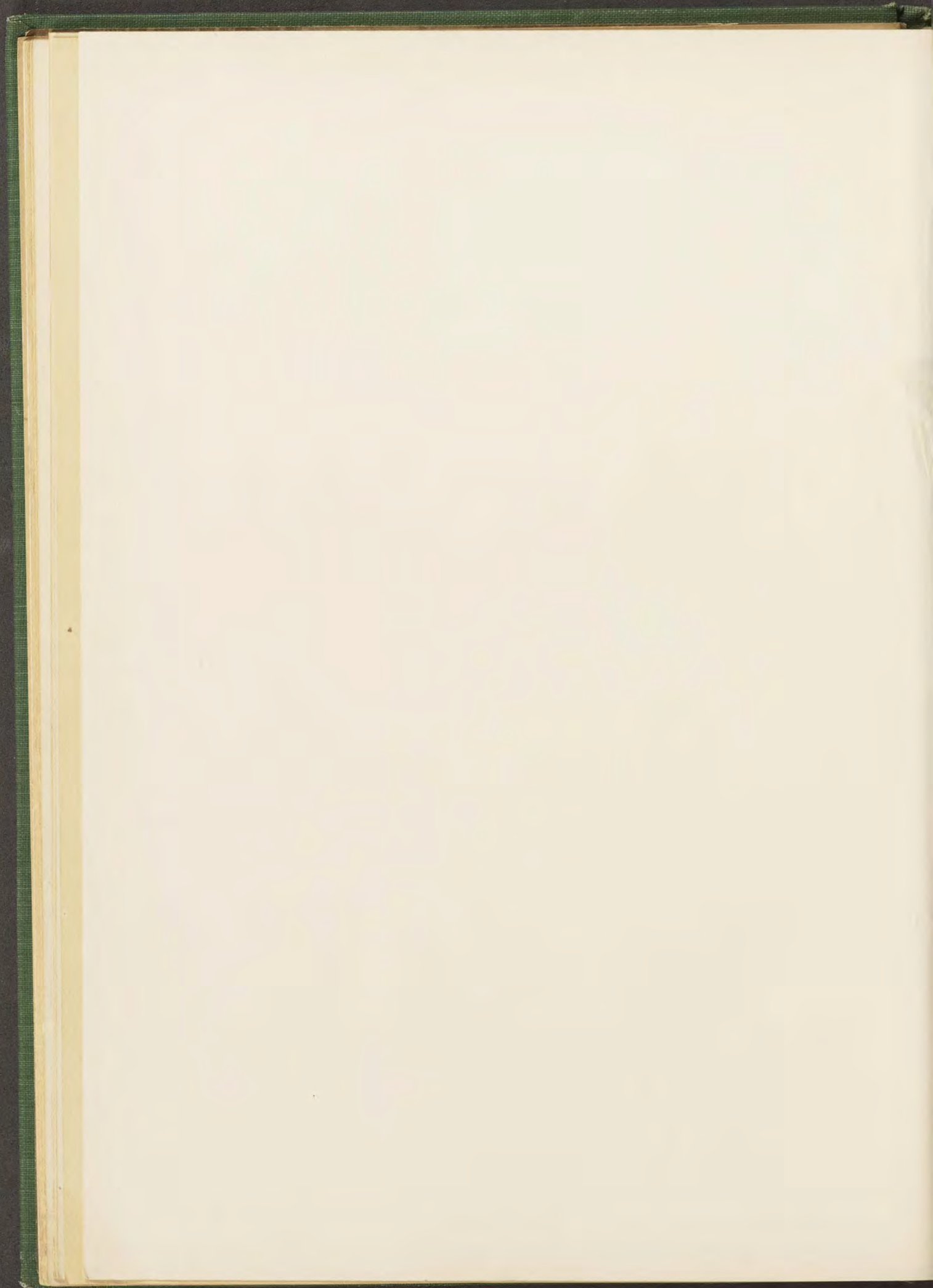
constant communication with civilization, and frequently the people of Australia were able to read in their evening newspapers, the results of the morning's doings among head hunters in the unexplored heart of New Guinea!

My experiences with people and things as I found them have been accurately chronicled from my daily records of the trip, the information having been culled from such an authentic source as the natives themselves and corroborated wherever possible by personal investigation. Mr. Alan McCulloch was my able lieutenant and right hand at all times. Captain Andrew Lang, to whom the success of our hazardous flying program was due, was in charge of aviation. He was ably supported by aero mechanic A. J. Hill who attended to the rigging of the machine and to stilling the severe ravages of tropical decay. Mr. R. Bell was in charge of the vessel and of navigation, while I attended to photographic affairs and the general records. Mr. Williams, assistant ethnologist of the Papuan Government, joined us in Papua. Our native crew, to the number of eight, was selected from the canoe veterans of Hanauabada Village, Port Moresby. All were seasoned and capable seamen and exponents of the art of handling "white fella canoe."

My thanks are due to His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor of Papua, Judge Murray, who was ever a friend and ready with assistance when needed. Likewise I am under a debt of gratitude to the Radio Staffs at the Port Moresby and Thursday Island stations for their indefatigable energy and patience in reading our feeble signals and keeping us in constant communication with civilization while we were peering back into the dark ages. I particularly wish to pay tribute to the warm-hearted kindnesses extended to us by the incomparable Fathers of the Sacred Heart Mission, as well as the Australian Board of Missions, and to send a warm greeting to



NEW GUINEA AND THE TORRES STRAITS SHOWING THE TERRITORY COVERED BY CAPTAIN HURLEY IN HIS TOUR OF EXPLORATION



A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

my countless Australian friends whose screen patronage and good wishes made possible the realization of my Elephant Island dreams.

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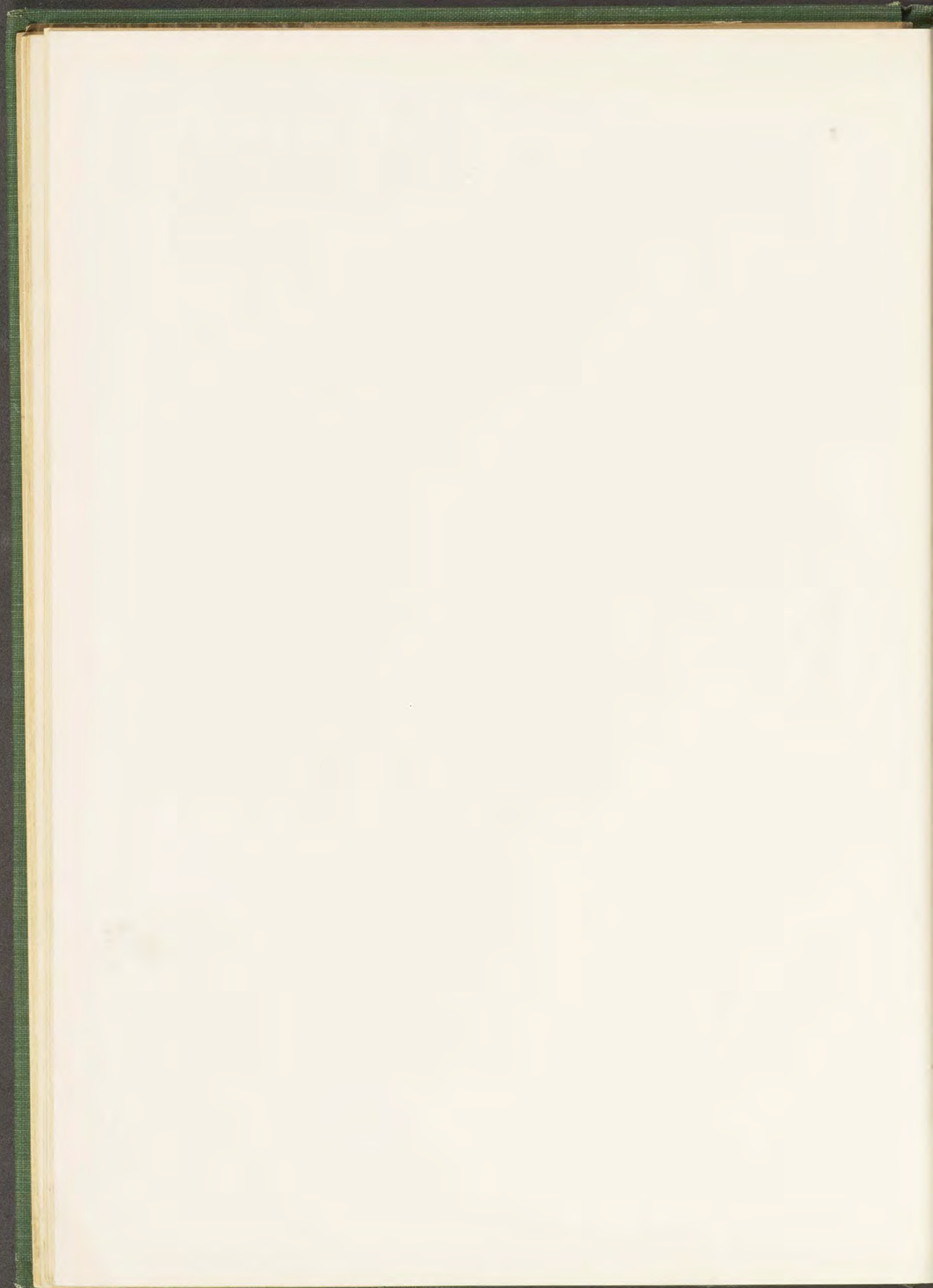
Cape York, the northernmost limit of the island continent Australia frays out into an archipelago of islets which litter the Torres Straits and extend across to the shores of New Guinea one hundred miles to the north. The navigation of the Straits is highly intricate and treacherous owing to the maze of coral reefs, shoals, and the swift running tides which rip and swirl without definite period or orientation between the vast land masses of Australia and New Guinea.

Torres Straits is Australia's commercial gateway to the Orient. Thither great liners pass, stopping for a few hours at Thursday Island to allow their tourist freights to go ashore on a brief sight-seeing tour, all oblivious of the fact that but a few hours' steaming across the Straits would bring them to the threshold of a great land where dwell in all their barbaric savagery the crude denizens of the stone age.

Few passageways of the sea hold so much of rude adventure and romance as Torres Straits. Spanish and Portuguese voyagers in search of treasure lands passed this way only to meet a doom upon the reefs, unrecorded save for copper fragments and corroded coins bared by storms along the coral reefs and brought to the eyes of a wondering world by the pearl divers. What became of the crews of the vessels? Were they butchered mercilessly by the bloodthirsty hordes of the neighboring shores? Or were they accepted as supernatural beings—exactly what happened when we landed among them from seaplanes—and permitted to mingle with the tribe and so indelibly stamp certain featural characteristics upon the present generations? Could this account for the marked

A panoramic view of the Kikori River and its delta taken from the summit of Mount Neuri, the only bit of high ground within a radius of hundreds of miles. The picture is characteristic of much of western Papua which is no more than a vast expanse of swamps and shifting mud in which the river is constantly altering its course. Rain falls incessantly and the temperature seldom drops below eighty-five degrees. Two hundred and fifty miles inland from this endless mangrove swamp the party discovered the Sambio tribes.





A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

Spanish and Hebraic types that today inhabit the regions contiguous to the reefs where the relics of wrecks have been found and brought to the surface?

Ethnologists are confounded regarding the origin of the Torres Straits islanders and the aborigines of New Guinea. Beyond conjectural hypothesis or theory there is no record of history, no tangible clue in metal or stone to elucidate the enthralling problem.

The adventure opens at Thursday Island, an emerald gem set in the center of a cluster of verdant islets, round which the turquoise waters of the coral seas race and rip at five knots. The small township nestles cosily along the waterfront at the base of mamelon slopes verdured with waving grasses during the northwest rains and parched brown and barren when the wind for eight long months sweeps up from the southeast. Offshore a large fleet of pearling luggers rests from its labors. Others sail from time to time proudly into the harbor, deep-laden with mother-of-pearl; some head for the treacherous seas to reap a perilous harvest from the pearling fields. Like beggars they go and, if fortune turns the helm, like princes they return. It is a desperate game—burning days of ceaseless tossing and rolling on a glittering sea, days of stumbling through the ooze of the grim sea floor, ever enticed by the lure of chance.

Along avenues of rollicking sea, our sail hard-pressed and our spurting bows running free, we move driven by the southeast wind that sends the crested waves chasing us. Over the horizon float miraged forms of distant islands which, like pleasant dreams on waking, take shape as we meditate and resolve themselves presently into things tangible, fair and beautiful. So with these arcadian isles as we progressed, the miraged forms settled lower and lower until they rested upon the sea and then grew into definite shape, looming into

The *Eureka* was a flat-bottomed, shallow-draught vessel with an auxiliary engine. Both ship and engine were antiquated and in miserable condition, but the *Eureka* was the only vessel available in the harbor of Port Moresby. The craft carried a native crew recruited from Hanauabada village, a colony of Melanesian origin and semi-civilized in character, with the addition of one member picked up as river pilot at the primitive village of Kaimare.

The ship was crowded to utmost capacity, carrying a complete and powerful wireless apparatus, a large amount of equipment for the use of McCulloch, the scientist of the party, food and gasoline fuel for the ship itself and the seaplane which accompanied her part of the way into the unknown. The wireless proved invaluable. Even in Lake Murray, one of the few unknown spots of the earth, surrounded by cannibals out of the Stone Age, it was possible to keep in constant communication with the great city of Sydney. The party received messages from home, and in the evening newspapers of Sydney citizens were able to read on the same day the adventures of the party among the Lake Murray head-hunters.



THE *Eureka* IN WHICH THE VOYAGE WAS MADE UP THE FLY RIVER INTO THE UNKNOWN SWAMPS
ABOUT LAKE MURRAY



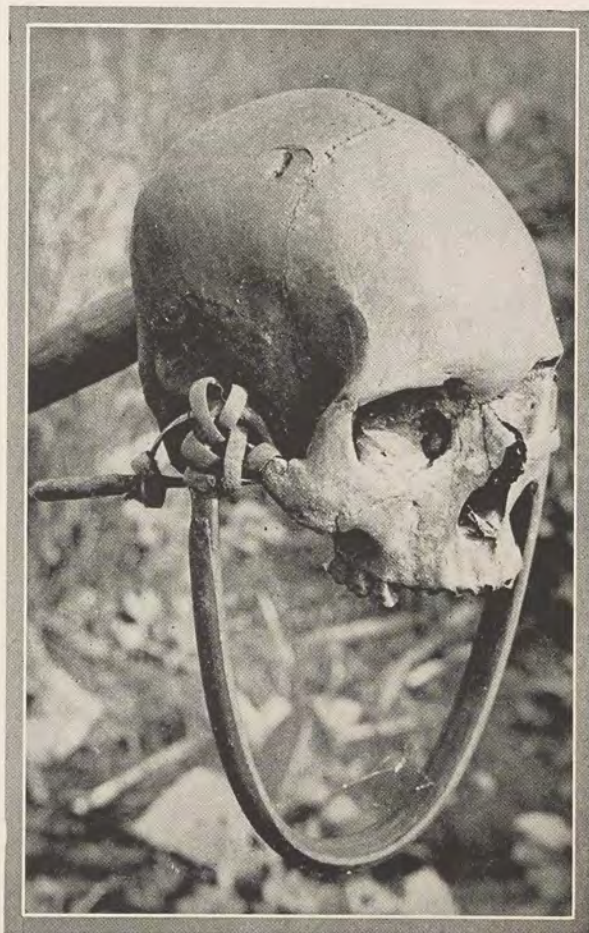
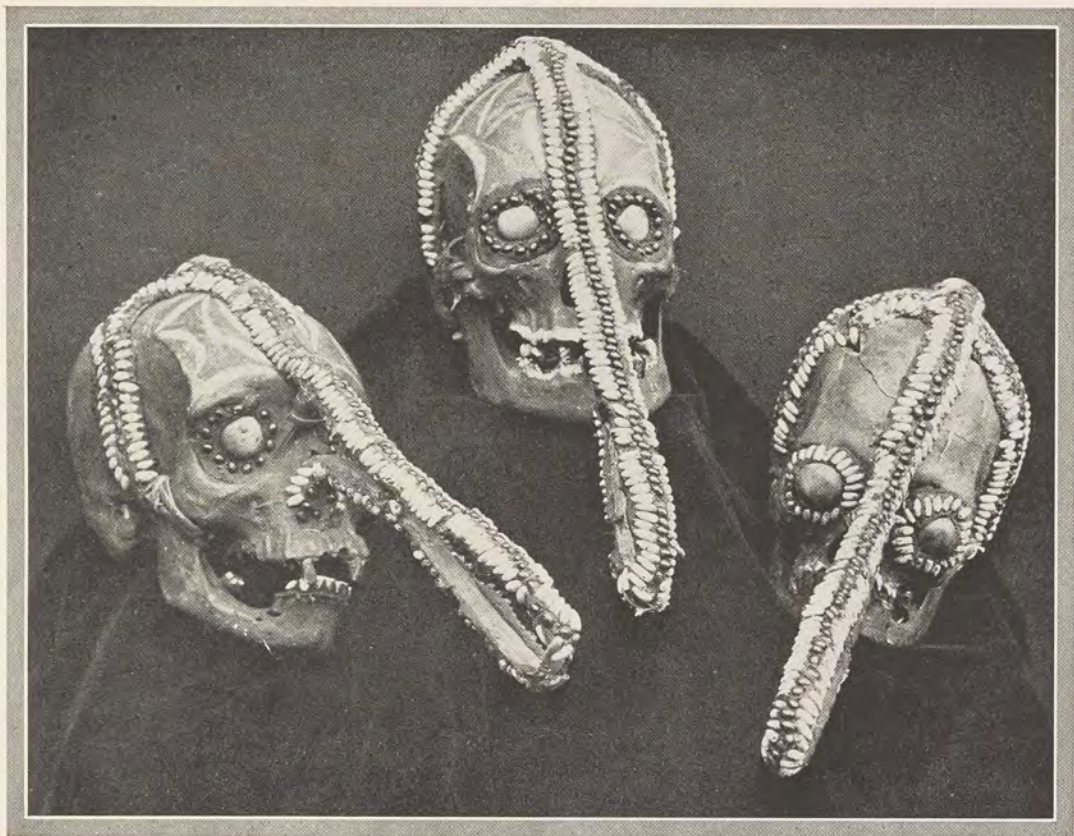
A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

faint blue silhouettes against the azure sky, resolving as in a magic transformation into details of green hills planted to their crests in palms, into white-ribbed beaches like carpets of silver on which an emerald sea breaks in a founce of foamy lacery. Half-hidden from the sea by palmy shadows, peep grass-thatched villages and isolated huts from which emerge people bronzed and smiling, waving and hailing as we drop anchor within a pool of reflections girdled by shore reefs and coral boulders.

The scarlet poncianas and frangi-pani are in flower; the island breathes a fragrance of blossom and song. The God-fearing children of nature gather on the white beach, the men in scarlet lava-lavas, the women in night-dress gowns; the scene is bright with flowers and garlands and childish merriment. All this as we row ashore. An anthem of welcome fills the scene and we ground pleasantly to the tune of the familiar hymn, "'Appy in the Love of Cheeses" sung by natives who have come to drag our boat ashore.

Perhaps I am less religious than these artless native folk; but in the midst of this empyrean setting, how falsetto and inharmonious that theme! How bizarre and unæsthetic the flowing mother-hubbards of the women! How absurd the names of the men. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, prefixed to such native names as Nuwared, Gogotin and Tagiriger! There are some who would even dress the trees and hide the flowers. What evil is there in a native's dress? What evil thoughts the most Godly of us harbor! For the very souls of these artless people are as simple as the souls of children. They are mere babes in the wood, ruled by missions and garbed in the hideous robes of a doubtful morality. Indeed they are garments of trouble, for as soon as sex is veiled and forbidden, there creeps in rebellious desire. Ordinarily the primitive savage, untrammelled by doctrines, is on a higher

Methods of preserving trophies vary widely among the headhunters of New Guinea, and most of the feeble artistic impulse of the savage tribesmen appears to be absorbed in these gruesome efforts. The trophies in the top photograph are simply skulls decorated and made incredibly grotesque by the addition of false noses, and bright red and gray seeds. The eye sockets are filled with clay and adorned with pebbles and seeds in a weird attempt at realism. They are probably the skulls of relatives. At the left below is a trophy in which the skull has been used as the base in modeling with clay a portrait of the victim. After the modeling is complete, the hair of the victim is placed on the skull. Some of the natives showed a high degree of skill in this modeling process. The skull in the lower left photograph was placed across the path of a Lake Murray village as a warning to the intruding party. The fracture which killed the victim is plainly to be seen. It was caused probably by a blow from a stone club.



THREE METHODS OF PRESERVING TROPHIES IN NEW GUINEA



A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

moral plane than exists in our pseudo-civilization. He has certain tribal ordinances which must be observed, and though a few vices may appear revolting, it never enters his mind for an instant to depart from the inherent traditions. His laws are a part of his physical constitution just as much as his body and limbs. He respects implicitly the commandments of his fathers, and these, after all, are the foundations of morality.

The islanders of the Torres Straits are a likable people, generous and laughter loving, Arcadians in Utopia. There is more happiness and content in the grass-thatched bungalow beneath its canopy of rustling palms and the dome of God's free blue sky than in the dingy confines of many an apartment mansion filled with the useless gewgaws and encumbrances of a civilization which has turned us from our true selves into artificial by-products of humanity.

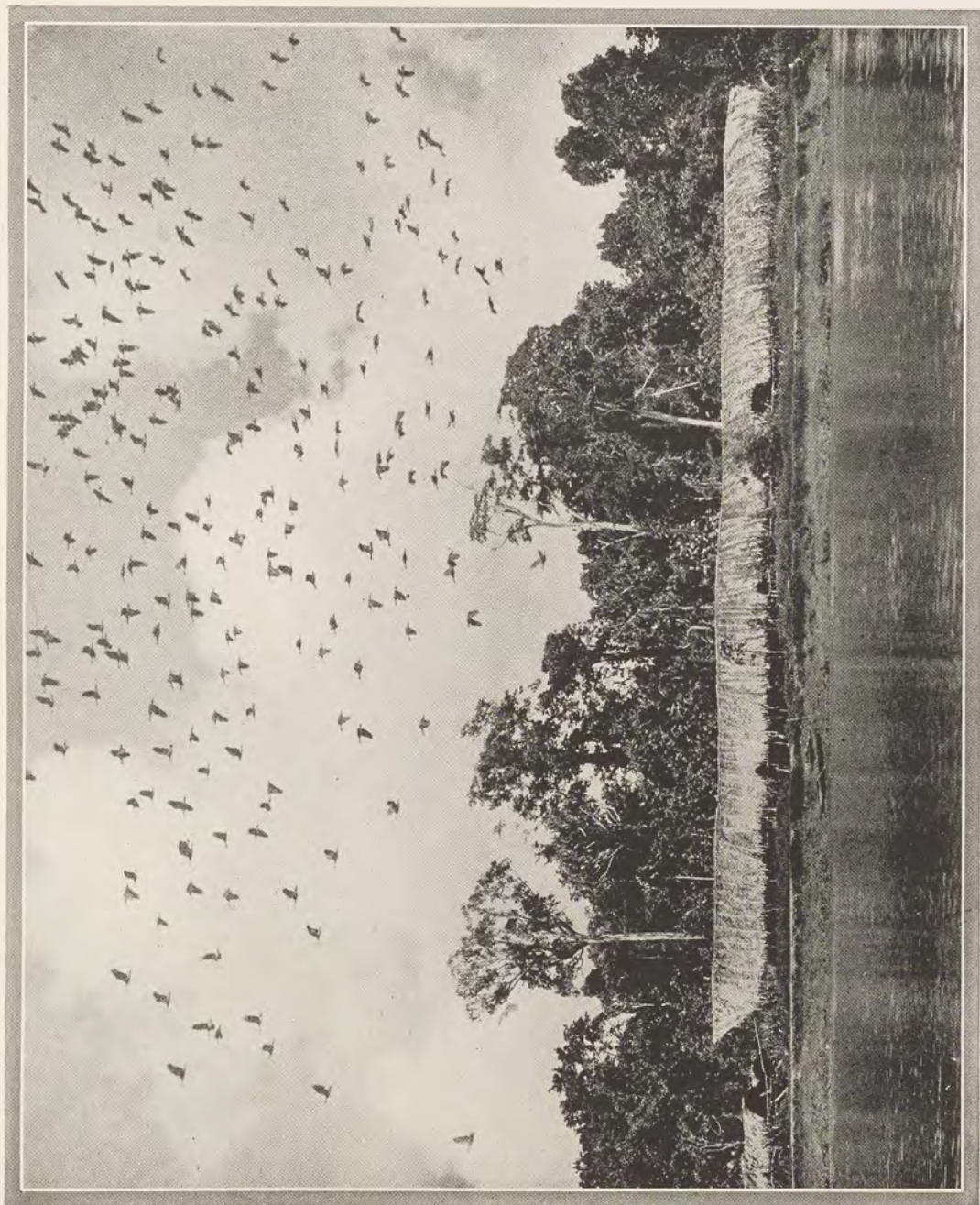
Entering deeply into the lives of these people, I lived for some months in social amity, joining in their games and pleasures, hunting the dugong on the high seas and diving down to the sea bed in quest of pearls.

3

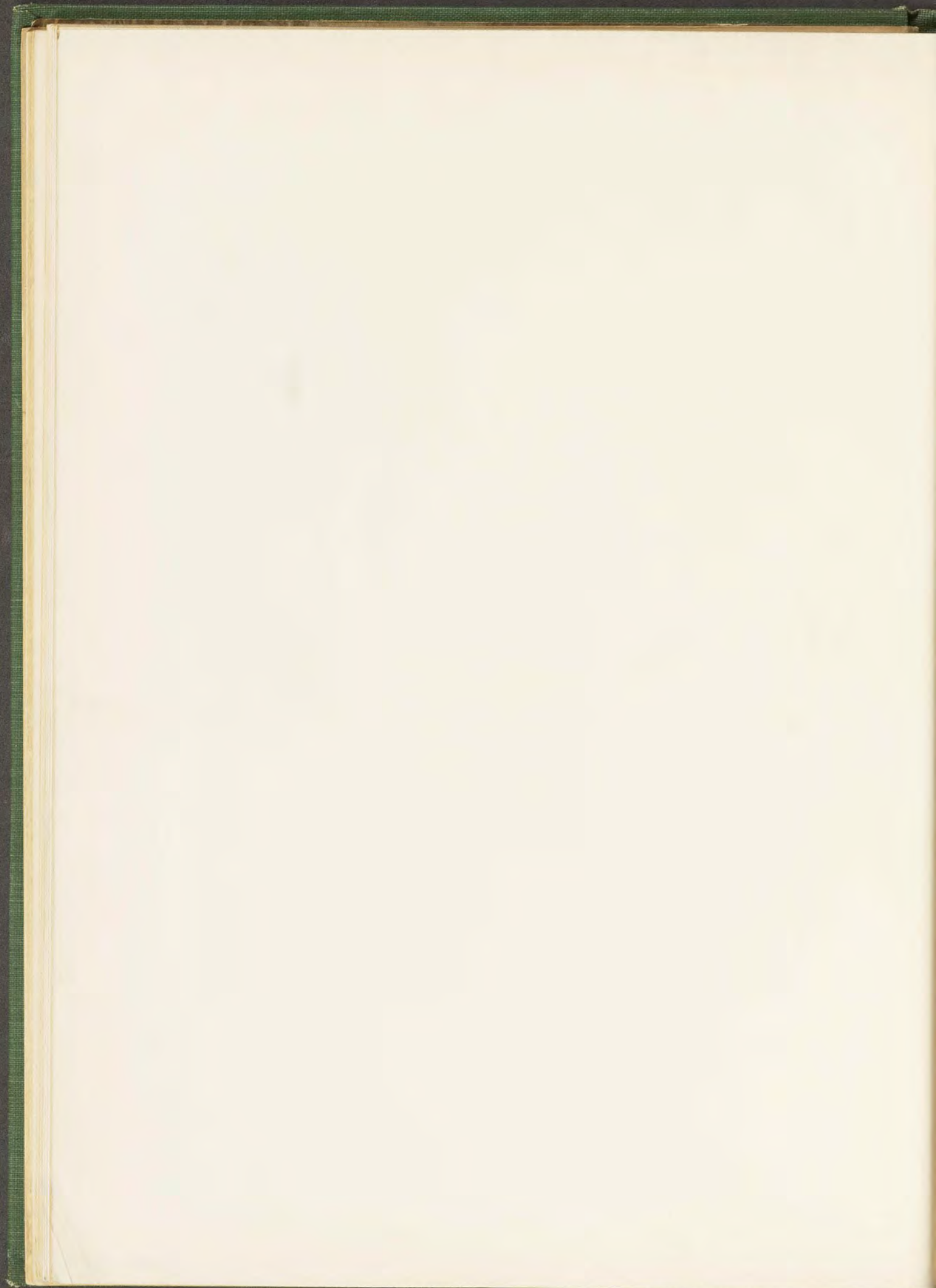
The northern boundary of Torres Straits is like the threshold of Despair. Faintly through a fitful haze appear fleeting glimpses of a low coast, of dun-colored seas and mud-banks, a presage of inexplicable evil. A sense of gloomy depression broods over the place, and one is torn between the desire to return to the happy isles of sunshine and the lure to press on and seek behind the inscrutable shroud of storm the secrets that lie beyond. At night, when the full fury of the tropic storm breaks over the land and the lightning makes luminous the clouds with a coruscating flicker, it seemed that my tossing barque rode the chaos of waters at the portals of a lost world.

Whether communism marks a state of progress or retrogression, the fact remains that in New Guinea it has reached its finest flower. Whole tribes dwell together in a common room beneath a common roof, sharing everything, with no more privacy between family groups than a few mangrove sticks.

In this house the communistic principle was extended to include two tribes which united beneath a single roof for purpose of protection. As frequently happens in Papua, the two tribes, although neighbors for scores of years, spoke different dialects virtually incomprehensible to each other. They appeared however to live in perfect harmony and intermarriage doubtless will bring about a common tongue as well as stronger and better offspring.



A TYPICAL COMMUNAL LONG HOUSE ON THE BAMU RIVER



A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

This strange land, one of the world's last regions of mystery, falls beneath the dependency of the Australian Commonwealth. Its area covers some ninety thousand square miles which is but half explored. Beyond the coastal littoral and the riverways which have their origin in the mighty Owen Stanley range extending the length of the land, lies the *terra incognita* inhabited by savages as lawless and primitive as they were at the dawn of creation. Occasionally a small party of government officials valiantly forces its way into these untrodden realms, comes into contact with the natives, establishes the prestige of the whites, and by passive conquest gradually brings under the sway of law and control another area and tribe.

The rugged and impenetrable nature of the country renders the work of exploration laborious and tardy, and the process of establishing friendly relations with cannibals and head-hunters by moral suasion, strings of beads and iron axes, needs daring, resource and disregard for such trite receptions as showers of arrows and stone clubs. Occasionally an inquisitive wanderer in uncontrolled areas loses his head, but as it is reverentially preserved in the tribal Valhalla with other similar trophies, there is some consolation and posthumous glory in an original demise which suddenly transforms one from a nonentity in life to a famous martyr in death.

In times not long past spiritual doctrine held insufficient bodily substance for the cannibalistic flock, who found more tangible enjoyment in the flavor of their prime shepherds. The present day missionary is of a tougher breed which finds ample work in the safer semi-civilized regions and has a better conception of how to live off the natives than the reverse. The greatest problem faced by the government of Papua is the preservation of the native race; for with highly primitive people the race disintegrates and speedily dies out as soon

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as it falls subservient to white control and is compelled suddenly to give up many of its customs.

Primarily as in all British colonies, the natives are given equal if not preferable rights to white intruders, and everything possible is being done to preserve and foster the race with worthy results. Not only is the land geographically complex and almost impossible of penetration, but the people themselves are a puzzle, rarely moving in their primitive state beyond the purlieus of their own villages for fear of hostile neighbors; indulging still in the most barbaric rites and fantastic ceremonies, and as diverse in type and physique as the endless dialects they speak.

It is behind the vast and shallow expanse of the Gulf of Papua, itself little more than a shifting delta of mudflats and low islands where a score of huge rivers pour their silt-laden volumes into the sea, that the most interesting and pristine division of Papua is to be found. Here the people are mostly head-hunters and cannibals, characterized by a rich ceremonial life, and indulging still in a form of ancestor worship and skull-cult.

Broadly speaking, the population of the great island may be regarded as consisting of three main groups: (1) those people just referred to who live in and behind the great delta, and throughout Western Papua, (2) the pygmies, a very diminutive, dark-skinned, woolly-haired race inhabiting the mountains of the interior, (3) the coastal peoples dwelling along the entire southeast and at intervals along the northeast coast who are characterized by lighter skins and immense chevelures of frizzy hair, and who doubtless immigrated centuries ago from Melanesia.

With what delight I hailed the sound commonsense of the administration which forbids absolutely the wearing of civil-

A FORGOTTEN LAND OUT OF THE STONE AGE

ized tatters. Today, in this unique dominion of native welfare, nature still provides man's principal garment. The modes of dress vary with the tribes—shells, grass sporrans, fibre skirts, and chic creations of beaten out bark which leave alike much to the imagination and to the mosquitoes. So far as morality is concerned, I am convinced that the grass skirt is not so meretricious a garb as the half-concealing, half-revealing inflictions of the missions which prevail throughout the South Seas. Hygienically considered, the hubbard garment is a dangerous menace that should be universally proscribed.

This then reveals something of New Guinea—a land where the forest is silent with the mystic hour of hushed expectancy, where the infinite ceiling of stars grows grey as the pink of dawn breaks over the tree crests, where the jungles trill with warbling melody as the countless feathery choristers pour forth a rhapsody of love and praise. The great sullen rivers glide on in golden silence. The sombre shadows of the tangled banks change into vine-clad masses of scarlet flowers as the sun over the mountain domes rises to dissolve dark silhouettes into particles of glorious color. From mountain crest to sea-kissed beach there is more glory and beauty in this enchanted land than I dreamed this world contained. The brand of commerce has scarcely touched these shores. The slayer of the forest has not even disturbed the birds. The land is as nature made it, and long may it remain so!



CHAPTER II
THE FLOOR OF A TROPIC SEA
PEARLS, CORAL AND GLITTERING DEEPS



CHAPTER II

1

THE word "industry" in its modern sense, raising as it does pictures of gigantic blast furnaces or rows of twinkling cotton looms, has no meaning after one has left the coast of Australia and steered north into the Torres Straits. The nearest approach to industrial development in this virgin tract lies in the pearl fishing, the search for the *bêche-de-mer* and the manufacture of primitive yet beautiful pottery by the women of Mailu and other villages of the Papuan coast. Beyond this there is nothing which resembles the exploitation of man in factories, of a sacrifice of man to the Gods of Commerce. Agriculture exists on a scale so primitive as to barely warrant the use of the word in describing the lazy planting done by the natives. There is no necessity. Why plant and cultivate fruits and vegetables when the Lord provides so amply, when one has only to pick bananas and coconuts from the trees, to step from the door on to a magnificent coral reef and there gather the most delicious of fishes? Turtle soup in the form of live turtles comes up from the sea across the white sands to the very doorstep. The nearest approach to agriculture in all these regions is the rough planting of yams and sweet potatoes in fertile hillside gardens where they flourish and give back a

(*Above*) The ingenuity of the natives in making heads for spears and arrows is nothing short of extraordinary. Until within the past few years, the workman had no steel tools of any sort. All the work was done with the sharp edges of the shells which are cast up on the beaches. Even to-day, many of the craftsman prefer the shell as a tool to the steel bladed knife of civilization. In working, the foot is brought into use with the same facility as the hands. To watch one of these men at work is to believe in the Descent of Man.

(*Below*) Another evidence of the Descent of Man. Two of the mountain tribesmen engaged in making fire. The process involves a strong bush vine and a split stick. The vine is drawn vigorously up and down until a small pile of sawdust gathers in the groove and presently begins to glow and at last bursts into flame. A civilized man attempting to make fire by the same process would find himself baffled. With the natives the whole operation is completed in something under four minutes.

The strange pigtailed worn by these mountain tribesmen are made by braiding the hair with long strands of fibre.



A VETERAN OF BABAI INSTRUCTING A YOUTHFUL INITIATE OF THE TRIBE INTO THE MYSTERIES OF MAKING AN ARROWHEAD



TWO MEN OF THE MOUNTAIN TRIBES ENGAGED IN MAKING FIRE



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hundredfold with little more than the occasional prod of a hoe or the pulling of a weed.

It was in this Eden that I found myself a few days after leaving Sydney, making my way as a vagabond, armed only with photographic materials, on the missionary luggers that thread constantly the tiny isles of the Torres Straits, carrying men, women and children back and forth from one post to another on these fringes of civilization.

My route followed a zigzag course, here and there among the island villages and the hamlets of the Papuan coast, among a variety of tribes, ranging in colour from the pleasant *café au lait* of the coast people to the dark brown of the inland aborigines whom I determined to include on my initial voyage. These aborigines, swarthy and pygmy-like, were driven inland by the great Melanesian migration and, despite their present position of isolation, are closely related to the Bushmen of Australia. There are no records in New Guinea, nothing beyond the traditions handed down from generation to generation, and the tribal tales which with the passage of centuries have become hopelessly distorted and fantastic.

2

At Thursday Island, the pearling luggers lay inside the harbour reefs . . . symbols of the only "industry" on the sea-girt patch of land. The sight of them, bobbing and swaying on the glittering waves of the tropic harbour, fired the imagination. Viewed from the hill above, their going in and out stirred me profoundly. The quest for sunken treasure holds no stronger lure than the search for pearls. Fortune and her co-partner death ever collaborate to spirit the diver to the inevitable brink, groping through the slime, stumbling across the dread sea floor, staggering ahead to win her prize.

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Pearls are the reward of hardship and suffering—they are indeed emblems of sorrow.

These and many similar thoughts lingered in my mind for hours, until at last, twenty-four hours later, I found myself aboard a lugger, outward bound past the foaming reefs toward the pearling grounds. All about me the crew were laying out the diving gear and making as much fuss about it as the exhaust from the engine, which was compressing air into the large cylindrical reservoirs. The diver seated on the hatch-combing replied to my questions in grammatical English. In words and manners he was obviously a higher caste than his fellows, though in physiognomy and stature I could scarcely differentiate him from the others.

My memory for names, especially tongue-twisters of the "Shima" category is deficient; for future reference I will re-christen the diver Nikko, his attendant Aki, and our vessel the Maru. A prodigious heap of garments was brought up from the cabin: the cinema handle turned, and the filming of "The Quest for the Elusive Pearl" began.

I could scarce repress sympathy for Nikko, who, seated on the cabin hatch, began to don the amazing collection of heavy woollen garments, as though he were about to explore the frigid Polar regions rather than the tepidity of the tropic depths. A tiny periapt of Buddha strung on a ribbon around his neck, he then donned two cotton singlets, a woollen sweater the thickness of a sack, a heavy sash bound several times around the abdomen, socks, leggings, and finally two pairs of unmentionable garments completed his under vestments.

Then a stiff waterproof suit, with rubber gauntlets to grip tightly the wrists, into which it required two assistants to force him. Last of all a heavy metal corselet of twenty pounds, and boots of uncouth elegance weighing thirty pounds, evidently

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designed to prevent the diver from submarine jazzing with the mermaids. Sails were now backed to hold little of the breeze, and the Maru's speed reduced to one knot per hour.

Lifting himself over the side, Nikko submerged to the waist, and being of an exceptionally light and buoyant disposition, two attendants loaded his back and chest with sixty-five pounds of lead to keep him down. Air was turned on, and the long length of air hose hissed into the helmet, which was jerked into position on the corselet with as little ceremony as the snapping home of a breech block.

A final adjustment of air pressure and life-line, and Nikko, now as hideous and formidable to look upon as any sea monster, waved farewell and committed himself to the deep. The air tube and life-line were paid out by two attendants, until a signal jerked on the life-line was answered by loosely making it fast to the vessel.

The life-line now did the service of a tow rope; towing the diver in our wake submerged below the sea. The diver regulates his drift above the sea-bed, which fortunately is remarkably even, by controlling the air pressure valve on the side of his helmet. By an ingenious series of signals jerked on the life-line, he is able to control the manœuvring and sailing of the vessel. On locating shell, a signal is jerked up the rope, which is immediately allowed to slip out with the air hose—the vessel still continuing her course.

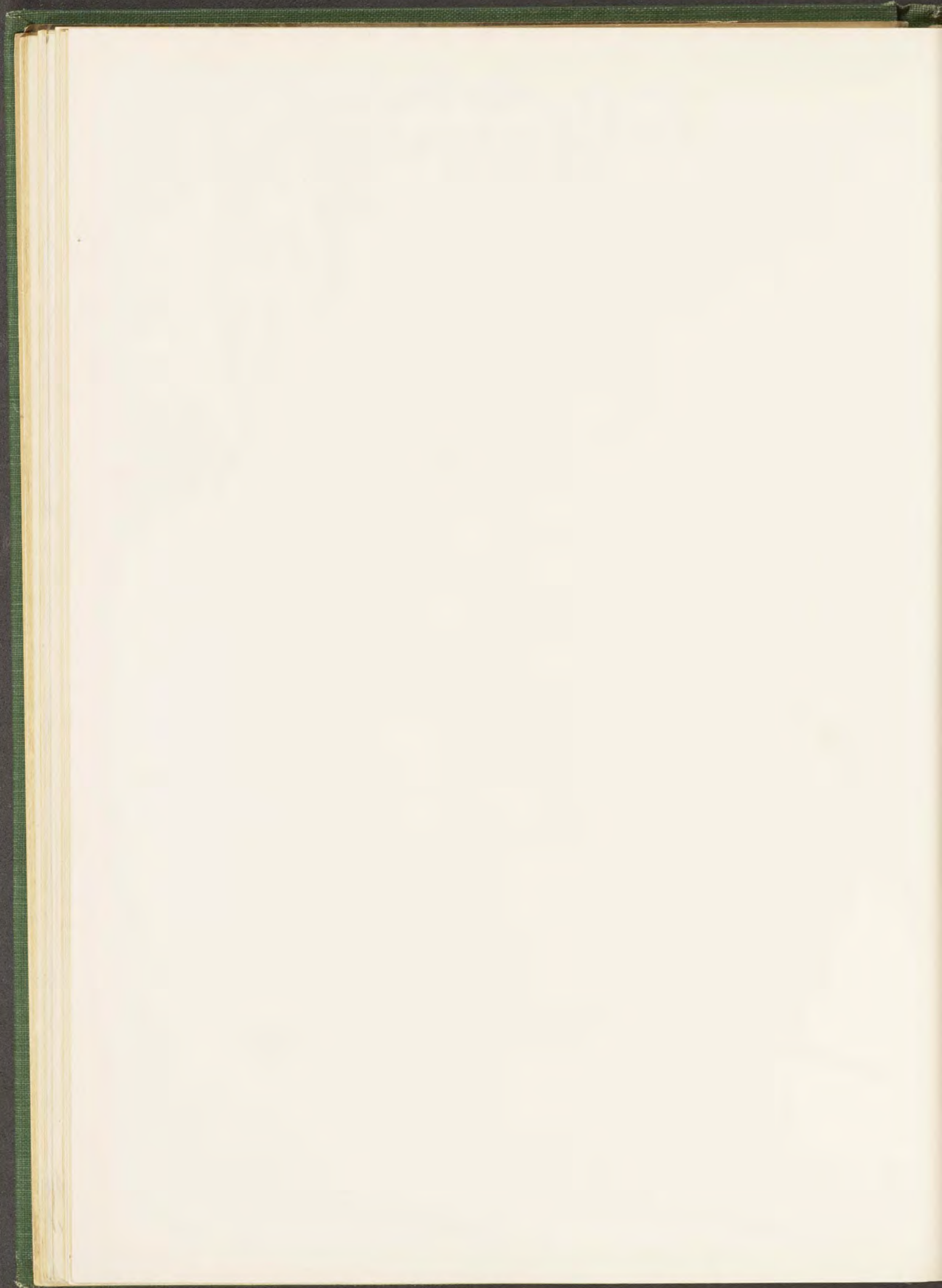
Care must be taken when gathering open shell, as it closes on being disturbed with a snap and with the grip of a vise. After it is gathered, the shell is placed in a net bag slung in front of the diver, and a signal jerked up to those on deck hauls the diver back to his original towing position, and so the gleaning goes on.

This process of touring necessitates keen perception, quick decision, and speedy action, as well as perfect co-ordination

This dance was one of the most elaborate and spectacular recorded throughout the voyage. All the trappings—the feathers and beads, the bizarre and intricate head-dresses, the staffs and the rattles—contributed a distinctive and original character. In pantomime and talent for mimicry the Torres Straits islander is unexcelled. Their dances constantly change in plot and character, since they bring into them incidents of the community which have attracted popular notice. One of the most amusing witnessed by the party was a pantomime satirizing the white military authorities. In this the dancers mimicked with genuine artistic exaggeration the stiff walk, the manners and the pomposity of the ruling white men. Another portrayed the effect of whiskey on the local constabulary. In the dance shown here, the performers wear rattles on their elbows which make a sound instantly suggestive of the rattling of a skeleton. Sometimes hundreds of natives take part in the dance and the sound of the weird rattles is audible for a great distance through the jungle.



THE DEATH DANCE OF THE NATIVES ON THE ISLE OF MER



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with those on deck. In spite of the exercise of greater skill and care, the hazards are manifestly increased, but the mitigation of physical effort on the part of the diver, the vastly greater area encompassed, and the increased haul, is deemed commensurate with the extra risk involved.

A diver may work in ten fathoms from sunrise to sunset, coming to the surface only occasionally for a blow and a smoke, without any apparent physical inconvenience or reaction. The danger occurs when collecting shell at the extreme depths of thirty and thirty-five fathoms. At this depth the water pressure is from eighty to ninety pounds per square inch, and the maximum time during which the diver may remain on the bottom is three minutes.

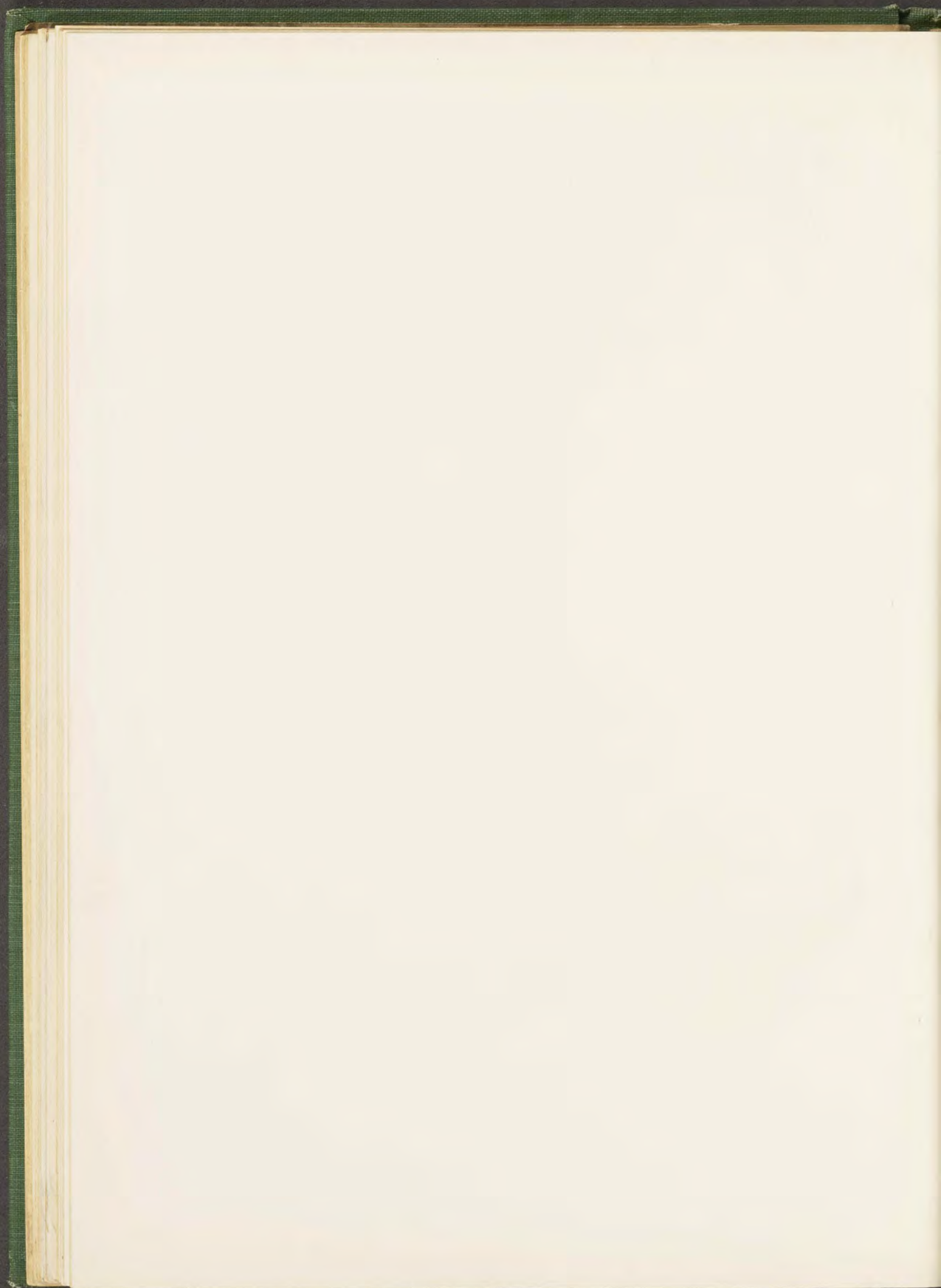
The shells at these depths are generally of large fine quality, and more plentiful; due, no doubt, to their having been fished to a less degree. When diving in thirty fathoms, the anchor is dropped, and the diver at once goes overboard; on reaching the bottom he signals accordingly, and with all haste gathers the shells; those on the top signal down so soon as the three minutes have expired, and the diver is brought to the surface in stages, which allows the body gradually to readjust itself to the diminishing pressure.

The recognized period for the descent is thirty minutes, but it is invariably done in half the time. Occasionally a rich clump of shell may tempt the diver to prolong operations on the bottom: by so doing he incurs the risk of paralysis and death, and should those above receive no signal, the diver is hauled up by slow stages to the surface, either a corpse or a paralyzed wreck.

In the case of the latter he is at once lowered to ten fathoms and allowed to remain there for several hours; then by tedious hour stages he is raised to the surface. In many cases recovery is complete. The period of a diver's active service

A belle of Boainal wearing a cape of split leaves of the banana tree. This woman, Hurana by name, was of an exceedingly hospitable and jolly nature and enjoyed every moment spent in taking her photograph. As the news of the white man's "magic pitcher-making box" spread along the coast, the party was overwhelmed by subjects eager to be recorded for the delight and instruction of their brothers and sisters on the other side of the world. Hurana had a genuine occidental sense of humour and made one joke after another regarding her appearance and the tricks of the camera. She was, in short, a thorough woman of the world.





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varies from five to ten years, though there are several who have spent their whole lives at the vocation.

At the end of the day the shells are cleaned of marine growths, scrubbed, and the edges clipped. The opening is done by placing the hinge of the shell on deck and carefully forcing a broad knife down between the shells so as to sever the abductor muscle, when the shell springs open. The flesh is then removed and minutely examined by sight and feeling for pearls. Pearls are generally found embedded in the mantle, where their presence may be detected as soon as the shell is opened. Valuable pearls are occasionally removed from blisters on the surface of the shell itself.

After the shell has been rough cleaned it is placed in the hold, as long exposure to the sun's rays impairs its quality. On returning to the shore station the shell is thoroughly cleaned, dried, assorted, and packed in cases for shipping abroad.

3

I will not dwell upon night time aboard a pearling lugger; it is but another of the hardships which follow in the wake of the day's toil. The ever-restless sea played game with our little vessel.

"Like toys upon the yeast of the waves," but even this might have been endured had it not been for the plagues of cockroaches that swarmed from every crack.

Not content with feeding upon the fibrils of muscle adhering to the oyster shell, they displayed a decided preference for the horny skin upon the soles of my feet, and the cuticle around the nails. The crew snored on, oblivious and apparently immune to the attacks of parasites and to the motion of the vessel. The cradle of the deep failed to rock me off to sleep—my skin being very sensitive and much appreciated by the

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voracious dark brown beetles, as well as by the diminutive flat evil-smelling insects which were equally much in evidence.

I joined in a fervent prayer next morning when my Buddhist friends, with faces set eastward, bowed to the rising sun. After breakfast—a hotchpotch of mysteries in which the blended viands of a multicourse meal mingled with the sea to confound my appetite, Nikko invited me to don his equipment and peer through the porthole of a diver's helmet into the treasure chest of the deep; adding also that any pearls which I might find would be my perquisites. The latter inducement was scarcely necessary, for the desire to visit father Neptune and his merry mermaids was strong within me.

I have already described the miscellaneous and prolific apparel worn by a diver. I discovered that there is as much fit in the cut of a diver's rig as in a shop-made suit. It fits and touches somewhere. Nevertheless, in spite of its loose fitting, it took considerable effort on the part of the attendants and much constriction on the part of myself to "shoe-horn" in.

Nikko is eight inches shorter than I, and our weights are little different, his being accounted for by girth. The woollen garments stretched, but the suit clamped me like a strait-jacket. The boots fitted—nature having been gracious to me in that respect—and so I lifted my legs with a mighty heave and over the side.

Then came the heavy leads on back and chest, and overburdened, I felt a Hercules with the twelve great labours before me. The tightening of screws on the corselet and the jerking on of the hissing helmet informed me that the supreme moment had arrived. No experience I have ever sensed held so many anticipations and qualms as my first descent.

Flying follows next; but the thrill is only momentary,



A CHARMING VIEW OF MAILU WHERE THE HOUSES, LIKE BEEHIVES, ARE RANGED ON A BEACH OF GLISTENING WHITE SAND AT THE EDGE OF A SAPPHIRE, REEF-GIRDLED BAY BENEATH A LUXURIANT ORCHARD OF COCONUT PALMS



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and after the machine once leaves the ground and begins to mount higher and higher in the blue, it changes to monotony and boredom; but here, dangling on the end of a thin lifeline, or staggering through the ooze of the sea's floor, surrounded by mysterious and uncouth environment with the lurking invisible and unknown on every side, the very solitude grew terrifying. I felt overwhelmed by almighty power and infinitely diminutive—even less than the tiny fish that glinted in silvery showers.

To the tyro the vital question is the control of the air supply, and the balancing of air pressure within the suit, against the water pressure without. Nikko adapted this to normal requirements by adjusting the valve on the side of my helmet. The glass porthole was clamped on, and after I had reassured myself that the life-line was not hanging by a few shreds, I mustered up my full courage, and, imitating the bravado of a master, waved adieu and fell back into the sea.

Chaotic of mind, with an eternal hissing and buzzing in my ears, I sank into the whirlpool of doubts. The glorious sun projected his rays in a dance of shimmering beams, coming, going, and changing as they were refracted or deflected by the rippled surface. Around swelled walls of opal green, through which the dim shapes of fish, flashing silver, darted. All this came in a hazy dream, and then a singing in the ears, a suffocating sensation, and I touched the bottom.

Impulsively I turned a valve to admit more air and a strange thing happened. I felt growing invisibly larger; my suit inflated, and like a submerged cork let go, I turned a somersault and sped to the surface head down! The ignominious appearance of two feet emerging from the surface provoked much hilarity aboard the lugger, for when I was eventually hauled up to the usual walking position, I observed

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through my porthole the faces of six Japanese, convulsed with subdued smiles.

Nikko came to the rescue and readjusted the valve, and again I slid down the sunbeams, this time actually walking on the bottom, and struggling against the current, which flowed as an invisible torrent, bowing fields of weeds and growths before it; and then I tripped and fell. Like Ye Knights of Olde, not having mine armour-bearer beside me, and the current being mightily strong, I experienced much difficulty in rising.

Once more the feeling of suffocation—just a little more air—I was learning. Alas! again I sensed the inflated feeling, and did my utmost to discover the secret of the valve. Sometimes it was not sufficient and I felt as if carrying the burden of the sea; but more often it was too much. The compressed air accumulated and inflated the dress in the region of the hips, and so I bewildered myself and gravitation and rose nethermost and posteriorwise into the bright sunlight.

4

During the ascent I ruminated on the vast breach betwixt flying and diving. In one there is a great difficulty in keeping up, and in the other of keeping down. In neither have I actually "had the wind up," but in diving the wind takes complete mastery and gets up itself. As it was I was hauled into the vessel, face downwards; one of the crew pushed my feet down with a paddle, and I grasped the life-line and looked into the amused face of Nikko.

Unscrewing my porthole for a blow, I pleaded one more endeavour and more weights. I also asked Nikko that in case I signalled from below, to sail the vessel ahead and tow me like an expert diver. My temerity reluctantly won him over,



THE MAIN STREET OF MAILU VILLAGE, ONE OF THE CLEANEST AND MOST ORDERLY OF PAPUAN COMMUNITIES. THE VILLAGE IS BUILT ON THE WHITE SAND OF A CRESCENT-SHAPED BEACH AND THE THOROUGHFARES ARE KEPT SCRUPULOUSLY NEAT



THE FLOOR OF A TROPIC SEA

though I think he was more concerned about my crashing his helmet against a coral knoll than about my skull.

My descent to twelve fathoms with the added weights was as a stone. I wandered through clumps of fantastic growths, swaying to flowing tide, with the gaudily marked fish darting hither and thither like gorgeously plumaged birds in a prehistoric wilderness. Gaining confidence with each step, I signalled to those on top to haul up the anchor and proceed. I could hear above the continual singing in my ears, the clanking of the winch, and following the slow, upward trend of the chain.

So as to keep the life-line as short as possible I gradually advanced with the vessel, as the winding in of the chain drew her forward until she stood directly above the anchor. A movement amongst the weeds, an uprooting, a muddy cloud, and the ship drifted free. Slowly up, link by link, went the anchor, looking like an absurd fishhook in the midst of a shoal of sardines.

A signal from aloft warned me to prepare for the worst. The life-line tautened, and I felt being dragged forward. The speed gradually increased, and by careful adjustment of the valve I began to slowly rise and submarine-aquaplane.

Gliding above a tangle of fernlike fields and rank weeds over the dazzling splendours of the coral, surrounded by the flash and gleam of finny beauty and elegance, and engulfed by unutterable loneliness, I was overawed by the unreality of this sublime world.

Strange creatures came through the luminous green to peer—then darted and faded away. Shoals of tiny fish scurried like meteor showers. But the colours, like an uncontrolled garden, ablaze with blooms, dazzled the senses with their brilliant confusion.

Bushes of pink corals, shrubs of red, antlers of brilliant

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blue. Then green spires and rounded knolls stained with umber, gaps and holes and patches of sand.

Amidst this riot of tints darted fish exquisitely marked, complexly banded and mottled, that would put to shame a kaleidoscope. Everywhere was manifest the works of the Supreme Creator. Here lay a submerged world that rivalled the glory of the starlit firmament.

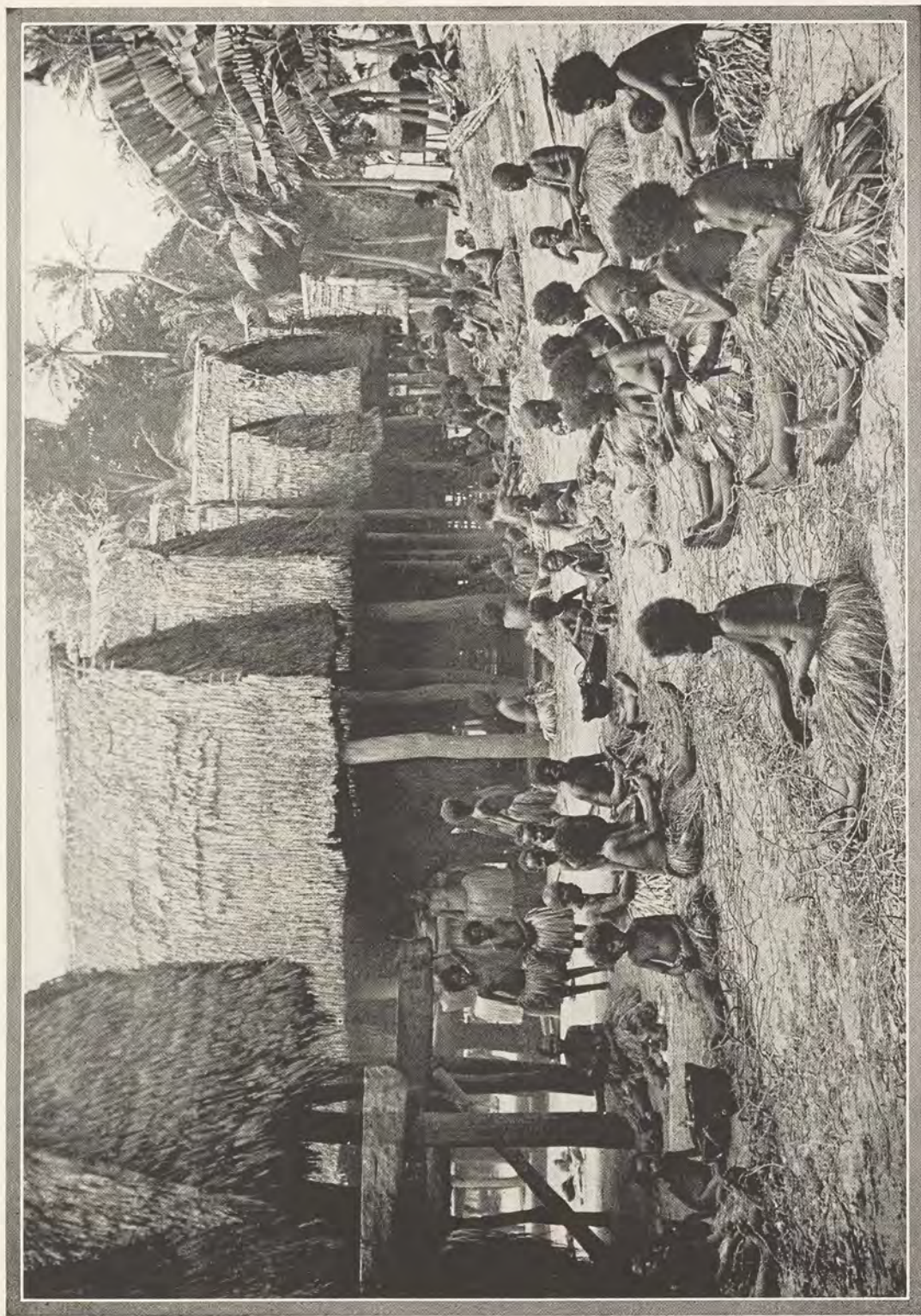
I saw no pearlshell, for my eyes were all engrossed with contemplating the whole grand scheme. A tug on the lifeline, and I was slowly heaved up, meditating the while "that it were easier to burgle a bank for pearls than to pick them from the pearl banks of the ocean's treasure chest."

5

The origin of pearls has been from remote ages, since the day when the member of some prehistoric fish-eating tribe discovered one secreted in the flesh of a mollusc, a mystery. Wild and extravagant have been the theories advanced as to their origin, but science of to-day appears to be at last shedding some light on the mystery and ascribes their origin to a trematode or parasitic worm. The worm when alive does not apparently induce pearl formation, but only acts when death overtakes it in certain parts of the oyster.

The dead worm still retains the form of a parasite, and the oyster, unable to rid itself of this evil, covers it with a pearly or nacreous secretion, precisely similar in composition to the lining of the shell. On the nucleus concentric layers of infinite delicacy and lustrous beauty are deposited, probably growing at the same rate as the thickening of the shell itself.

The latest conclusions of science appear entirely favourable to this parasitic theory as explaining one and probably the **most important** causes of pearl formation, and also that some



A BACK STREET IN MAILU ON A DAY GIVEN OVER TO THE MANUFACTURE OF LASHINGS FOR THE MAILU TRADING FLEET. THE LASHINGS ARE MADE FROM BUSH VINES FROM WHICH THE IRREGULARITIES ARE SCRAPPED WITH SHELLS. THE VINE IS STEEPED IN WATER UNTIL THOROUGHLY PLIABLE AND BEFORE IT DRIES AND BECOMES BRITTLE THE MEN HASTEN ON WITH THE LASHING



THE FLOOR OF A TROPIC SEA

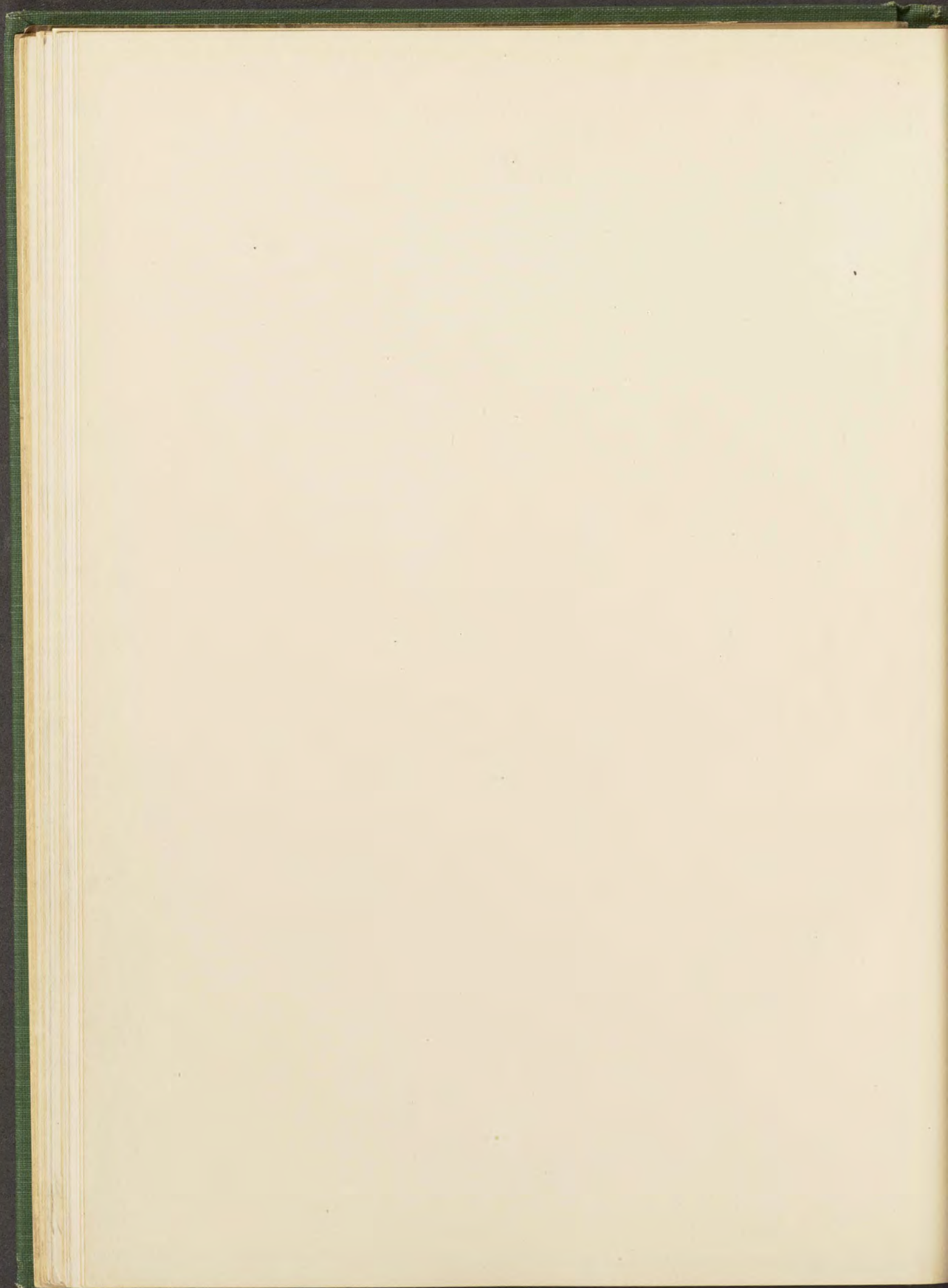
truth exists in the statement that "The most lustrous pearl is but the brilliant sarcophagus of a worm."

Pearl culture and farming is carried on extensively in China, Japan, and the United States and to a minor degree at Thursday Island. The production of pearls and "blisters" by artificial means has engaged attention from early times.

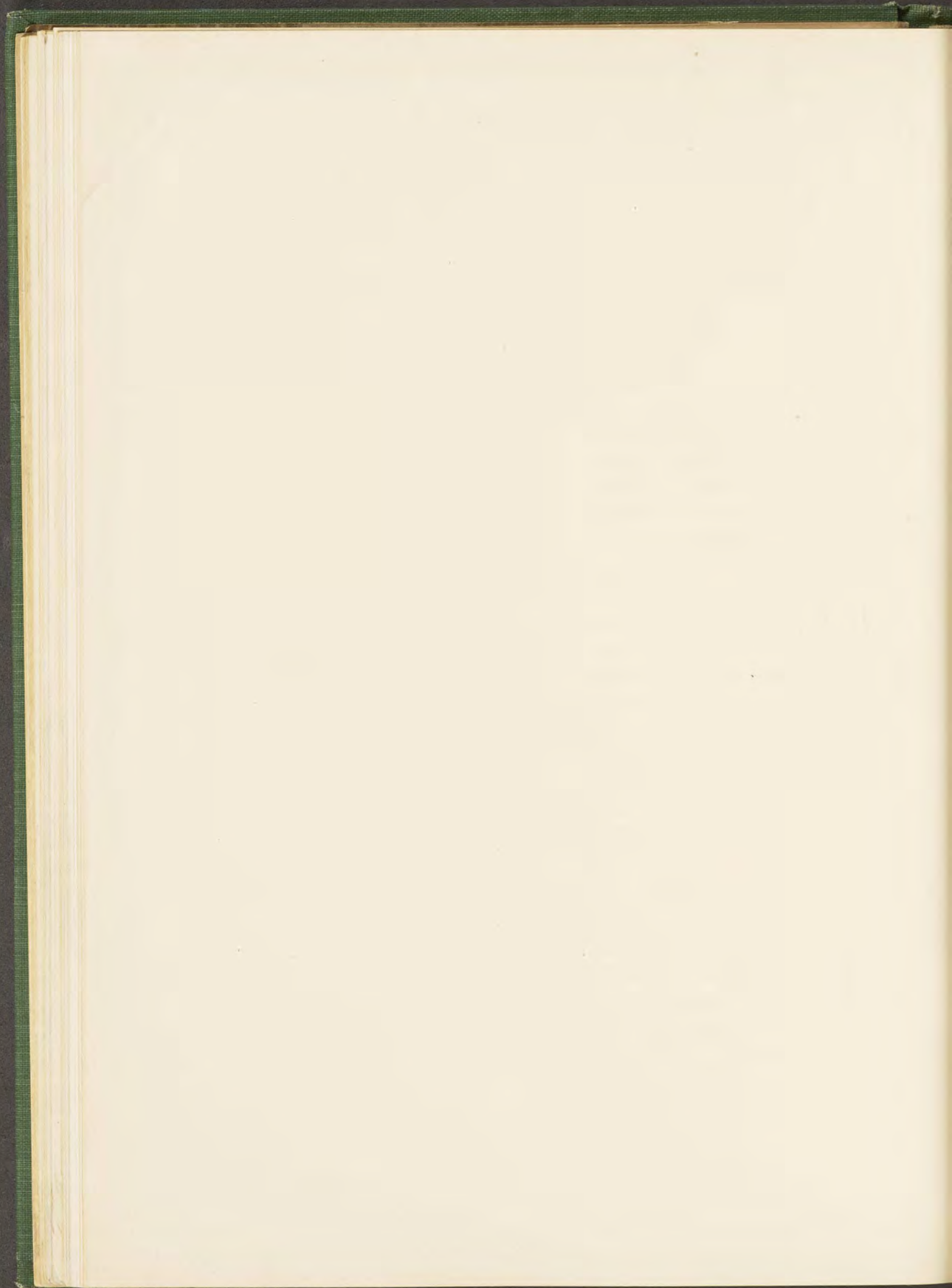
The Chinese practised the art of producing "culture pearls" for centuries and to-day a high perfection has been reached. Each grower has his own pet secret method, which is more or less a modification of the ancient Chinese. The oyster is carefully opened, either artificially or naturally, by placing in the sun. Narcotizing by a weak anæsthetic is even practised. Small bits of cork hold the shell open, while pellets either of pearl shell or other suitable material, are introduced within the mantle or between the mantle and the shell. As soon as released, the shell closes, and it is then returned to the culture-beds. The objects soon become covered with a thin pearly layer, resulting in twelve months in lustrous spheres of much beauty. Those introduced between the mantle and the shell will be found to be firmly secured to the latter, covered by a veneer of lustrous nacre.

The pearl is the most ancient and loved of all gems, and being perfected by Nature is beyond all human art to beautify. As written by a forgotten poet—"Forasmuch as the pearl is a product of life, which from an inward trouble and from a fault produces purity and perfection, it is preferred; for in nothing does God so much delight as in tenderness and lustre born of trouble and repentance."

"Ocean's gem, the purest
Of Nature's works! What days of weary journeyings,
What sleepless nights, what toils on land and sea,
Are borne by men to win thee."



CHAPTER III
MISSIONARIES AND BARBARIANS
MUKAWA, BOIANAI, AND MAILU



CHAPTER III

1

PERHAPS head-hunting is primitive barbarity, but it has a much more terrible counterpart in modern civilization—war. Civilization of to-day is after all purely a matter of grade in barbaric culture. It is questionable as to whether the primitive savage in his crude conceptions and beliefs, his system of socialism, his high moral status does not after all, live a truer and purer life than ourselves. His villages know not the destitution of great cities; he is not obsessed with the desire of greed, nor does he garb loose morality by a veneer of respectability. He may engage in an occasional conflict and capture a head or two, but this is won by honest combat. We, the supreme examples of a great age, concentrate the resources of nations to destroy human lives by the million. It would seem indeed as if modern civilization were degenerating. Yet civilization must force its way into the Garden of Eden and inflict its culture on these simple folk and carry them from their peaceful, happy villages to labour in mines and plantations; to create in them a desire for the unnecessary encumbrances and trappings of the white so that they may be lured into bondage.

The recruiting of indentured native labour to work the plantations and minor industries of Papua without affecting the growth of population is a serious administrative problem.

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Natives indentured from the remote districts of Western Papua and Membare are transported to work at points far removed from their homes whither they are not returned for a period of one, two, or three years according to contract. Naturally this is not conducive to the rearing and increase of families. Frequently, in return for a few civilized baubles—such as kerosene lamps which have not “the widow’s cruse oil supply,” and a quantity of stores which the men generally divide up among friends at home—the husband returns to find his domestic life shattered.

Excesses and vices are learned and indulged in, and though the “signed on boy” has quickened his wits and learnt cunning, he has lost his naïve simple charm. Naturally a large country like Papua with great economic resources cannot be permitted to stagnate and remain unproductive. Attempts have been made by the Administration to induce the natives to plant and develop their own plantations, but lack of funds and personnel has prevented this from being carried out to any extent. It would appear then that this work could be ably assisted by the missionaries, and if more sound practical training were substituted for spiritual teachings, the native would develop into a product more sterling than a very volatile and cunning spirit.

Too much attention is given to the native’s soul and too little to his terrestrial welfare. Almost every large village along the Papuan coast owns a mission station or has one within easy walking distance. In order to avoid religious competition and soul-snatching, definite areas have been wisely allotted to the various denominations. The Torres Straits Islands fall under the sway of the Australian Board of Missions (Anglican), the entire South coast, with the exception of Yule Island and a small section of the mainland contiguous thereto, is devoted to the London Missionary Society. The Sacred Heart Mis-

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sion has its headquarters at Yule Island and operates inland into the very heart of the mountains, while the Australian Board of Missions (Anglican) retains control of the entire North-East Coast. I have visited most of the stations and without hesitation say that the Papuan missions are doing a vast good in the country and carrying out native development which the Administration has neither the temperament, ability, or funds to do. The missionaries as a body are superior to most others I have met in the South Seas. They are more of a pioneering breed, and I don't think induced to the country through their stipend or visions of a life of luxurious tropical lassitude. Who can accuse the Anglican priest of being attracted to a fever ridden parish, to live by himself in a palm-thatched bungalow at the magnificent emolument of twenty pounds per year? No, there is a deep-set purpose more than material objective which even an atheist must admire. Who can accuse the learned Monseigneurs of the Sacred Heart Mission at Yule Island, of being there for the good of themselves? They enter the vast loneliness of the mountains to be swallowed up forever by the abysmal solitude. They are wedded to their Church and its work and they never expect to return.

Perhaps the ministers of the London Missionary Society are the more humanely treated; their stipend is ample to enable them to live at least decently. Their houses are comfortable. They have a retinue of servants; but in such a climate as Papua these are common necessities that count for efficiency. As for their sincerity, example the Clarks of Port Moresby; the little that might be left over from their year's stipend is devoted to native wants. Surely there is some merit in all this work.

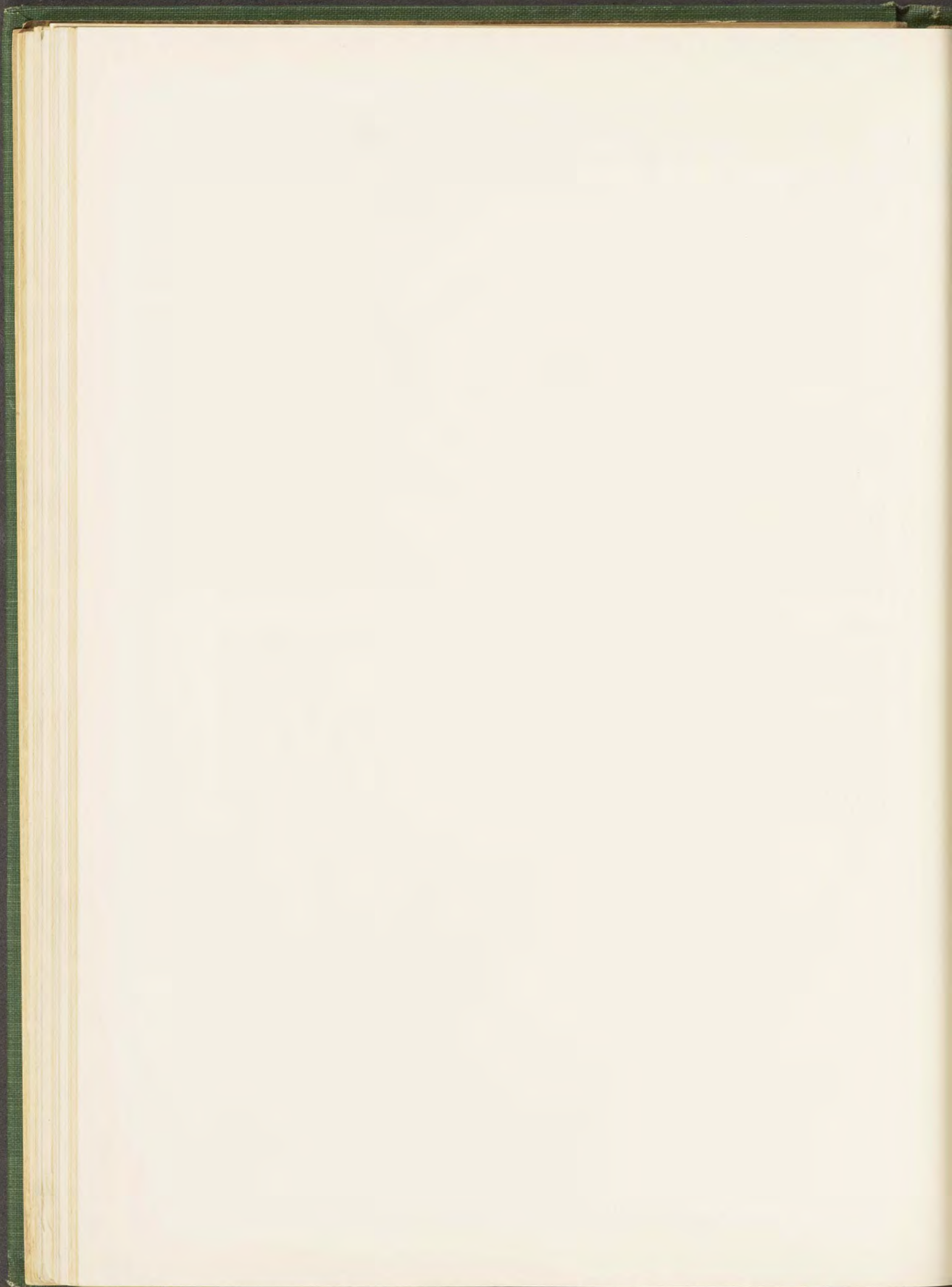
While not holding the missions up as towers of godliness, nor as a champion of their cause,—everything, even ourselves,

The pictures represent two stages of the work in which the native women have developed a remarkable degree of skill and artistic conception. The clay is dug from the hill behind the town to the beach on which the houses are built. Here the native women roll it into long sausage-like rolls with which they build in cunning fashion the structure of the pot. (A process illustrated in the upper photograph.)

The second stage (illustrated below) involves a smoothing into a symmetrical shape, after which the whole is baked in a fire of coconut fibre and bark. The result is beautiful in contour and practical in design. The natives of Hanauabada, like those of Mailu are great traders, and at favourable seasons load their pottery into canoes and navigate the coast as far as the Delta country, where the people have no clay. The pots are bartered for sago which is not available at Hanauabada. The pots are used for cooking utensils.



TWO STAGES IN THE MAKING OF POTTERY AT MAILU



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has defects—I must write of them in full fairness from my own unreligious pen. I am sure that a glimpse into the sorrows, labours and joys of the work of these pilgrims, set in their natural environment, will hold a deal of interest.

2

Standing in the waving grasses by the plateau lip, the prospect across the Pacific waters of Collingwood Bay from Mukawa Hill is alone worth the breathless climb up a rugged path—palm-fringed ribbons of golden beaches, washed by deep blue waters streaked with opalescent tints of coral shallows; inlets studded with verdant islets, reclining at the base of sombre wooded bluffs; a scene that calls back memories of Hawkesbury loveliness, and makes one homesick.

The land falls almost sheerly to a small coastal flat, restless with waving foliage of coconut groves, wherein is harboured the village, the grass-thatched roofs peeping up through the palms. In times gone by the Mukawans dwelt on this hill-top—the ruins of a village are about me as I write—and scattered around lie large boulders, the missiles of defence which those on top hurled down the hill on to the heads of up-climbing foes.

The wild expressions of the inhabitants, and the formidable name of this place, Sirage Kapukapuna—"the place for the roasting of the guests"—does not at first inspire one with bodily confidence; but to my dismay I discovered the boiling-down pots long since broken; nor could I induce any of the frequent visitors to victimize themselves, even for the filming of a fine old custom and the whole of my trade tobacco.

Along this coast there appears little likelihood of even stage-managing a cannibal festival; perhaps later in the wild west I might be more fortunate, but hereabouts it is not etiquette, though numerous of the old warriors acknowledged the flavourous superiority of two-legged pig over quadruped,

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and baring their black tusks in gruesome laughter, fairly smacked their chops at the thoughts of it. The Anglican Missionary who dwells on the hill has, with admirable foresight, made the three commandments: "Thou shalt not kill, Ditto concerning stealing and adultery," the dominant features of his sermons. So far he is hale and hearty after having instilled these inspirations into his congregations for twenty-three years, though by all the laws of puripuri he should have expired just twenty-three times. The stealing, being of a secondary consideration, is treated by the natives as such, and though one's life is quite safe, his goods are "susceptible." The adultery, coming last, is the last thing the Mukawans would dream about, though it would be interesting to observe how they first became aware of it as a heinous crime.

The greatest problem which the evangelist has to face in Papua is the multiplicity of dialects and the entanglement of tongues. Each village is proud of having its own variety, and though many words in contiguous villages are spelt the same, their meaning might be widely diverse. For two whole years the people were taught in Wedauan, certain words that were spelt in Mukawan precisely similarly, excepting in one letter. What a conflict must have racked their souls, for instead of being taught not to commit adultery, they were actually being told "Not to keep the canoe over the spot where thy friend hath dived!" Laudable enough teachings for a pearl-diver, but what an incongruous complexity to instill into the mind of a congregation of banana-growers! Again, the word Kanukanuma was freely misused to designate the Holy Spirit; is actually meant sweet potatoes. No wonder the hungry natives devoured the word! Passages from the gospel, including hymns, have been translated by the Anglicans and printed in half a dozen dialects, a work of infinite patience and intricate philology.



TWIN SISTERS FROM THE VILLAGE OF BOGA-BOGA. THEY ARE TYPES DESCENDED FROM THE MELANESIANS WHO MIGRATED TO THE COAST OF PAPUA CENTURIES AGO AND APPROACH MORE NEARLY THAN ANY OF THE ABORIGINES THE OCCIDENTAL IDEA OF PHYSICAL BEAUTY. THESE COAST NATIVES WITH THE INVASION OF THE WHITE MAN, HAVE ACQUIRED MANY OF HIS VICES AND FEW OF HIS VIRTUES



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The Thomlinsons of Mukawa are two dear old souls who began their ministrations when the coastal tribes were ardent cannibals, and were welcomed enthusiastically by them as probable courses for future festivals. But the old man was evidently too tough a proposition, and so his time was delayed—delayed indefinitely. Small in stature, he made powerful puripuri that exerted a strange influence over their superstitious natures. He also interested them. Their dreads and fears held no terror for this white man, and as he came to them in times of darkness and tribulation they began to like and believe in him. So through the indefatigable years his sympathetic teachings have wheedled away their heathenish delights and evil customs and turned their footsteps into the paths of civilization and Christianity. Now, most of the Mukawans are avowed Christians; but the actual depth of the avowment is a complete mystery which the third generation will solve, for by then the Papuan will have absorbed sufficient individuality to reason and adopt his own conclusions.

3

Along the north-east coast of Papua there are seventeen Anglican stations in charge of whites and about as many more in charge of South Sea Islanders and native teachers. During the thirty years of occupation and teaching, a magical change has been wrought over the coastal natives and those falling within the spheres of mission influence. The problem of racial extinction which has to be faced when primitive races are subjugated by whites has been retarded, and I hold that the presence of the mission is justified on this ground alone.

I was deeply impressed by the healthful physique and the comparative scarcity of disease noticeable around the numerous stations, the hideous and loathsome skin complaints universally prevalent having been treated and restored. The

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presence of a white missionary, whose ideal is genuine and practical enlightenment and betterment, has a contagious civilizing influence that has its reward in the conversion of fanatic head-hunters into amiable and useful people.

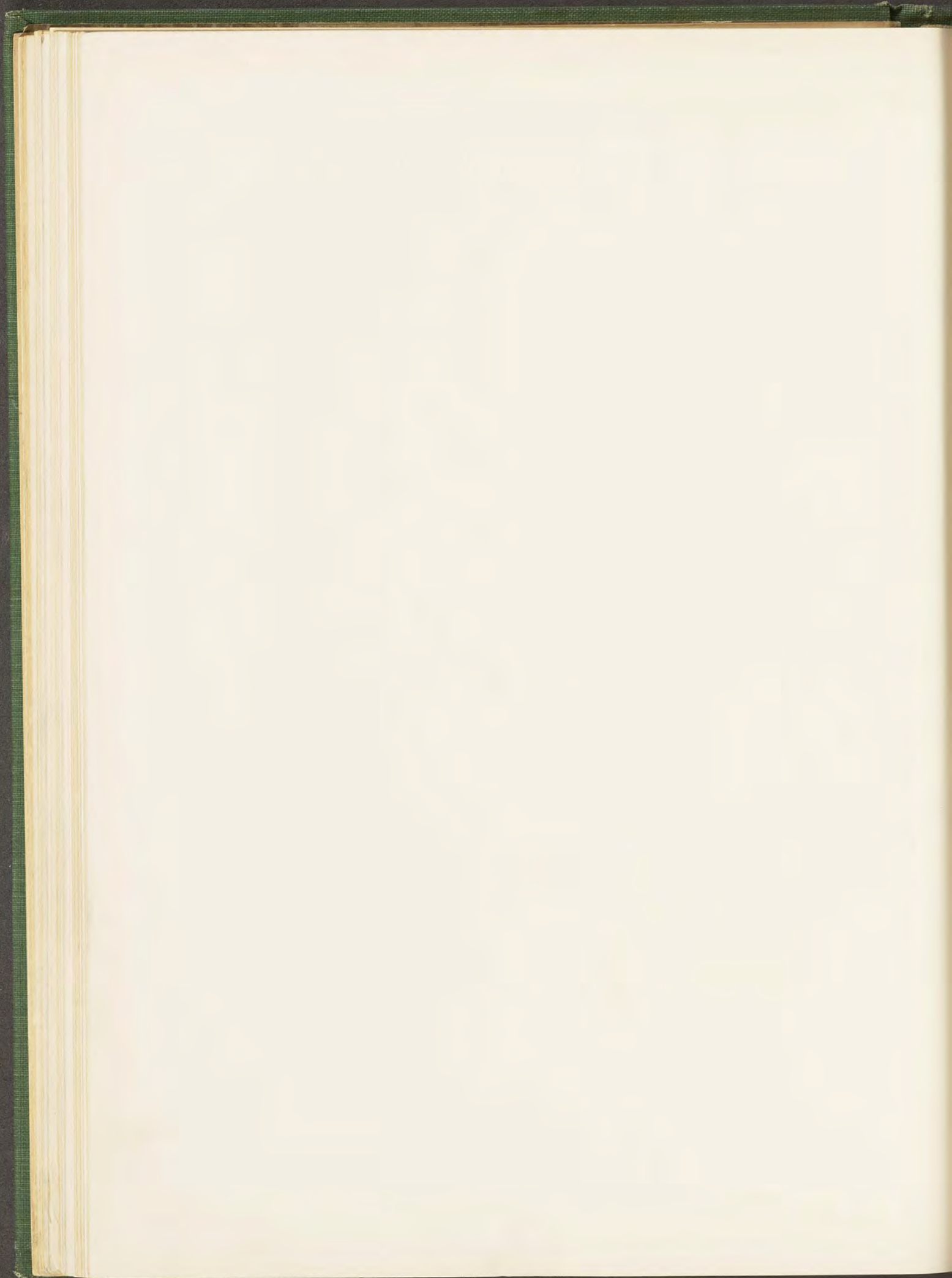
One cannot fail but hold in high esteem these Anglican pioneers. Recently I met a well-known missionary walking the streets of Samarai during a very sultry holiday, and he was wearing a long black overcoat. I remarked on this unseasonable garb and the reply, "If I did not wear this coat I could not wear these trousers, and I would have to stay in bed!" expressed tersely the good man's financial crisis. Three months' furlough comes every three years, when an extra inadequate allowance compels them to fall back on the hospitality of their friends.

On Mukawa Hill there stands a small lighthouse—it has been there for 12 years—and at dusk each evening the good father kindles the light, so that those going that way may pass through the treacherous tides and reefs and seek the haven of rest beyond. I sent my boat on from Mukawa, as I was desirous of investigating the hinterland of Cape Vogel on foot, and then, after crossing the promontory, voyaging by whaleboat across Goodenough Bay, and rejoining the vessel at Boianai. Pursuing a course through groves and forest glades, fresh with the overnight dew and sweet with the perfume of flowers, by golden beaches—walking barefooted on the pleasant tepid surf, with my native guide listening to my stories of white men fettered to prison-like cities, I arrived at the happy little village of Boga Boga.

The dingoes howled, a herd of swine scampered and grunted, children gathered around, and the old folks hailed, "Equala! Equala!" It did not take long to do the sights of Boga Boga, a couple score of large thatched dove-cots, well kept, the place scrupulously clean and wholesome. The chil-



HULA VILLAGE, ONE OF THE MOST PICTURESQUE COMMUNITIES OF THE PAPUAN COAST. IN TIMES PAST, THE NATIVES BUILT THEIR DWELLINGS ABOVE THE SEA AS A PROTECTION AGAINST ATTACKING ENEMIES AND THE CUSTOM STILL PERSISTS. THE ENEMIES ARE GONE, BUT THE SITUATION WELL OFF-SHORE IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA BREEZES, IS STILL PROTECTION AGAINST THE VORACIOUS MOSQUITOES WHICH IN SAVAGERY AND BLOODTHIRSTINESS ARE CLOSE RIVALS OF THE HEAD-HUNTERS



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dren brought me coconuts brimming with cool nectar, and as I sat down to rest in the shade of the palms, they gathered closer, beautiful little mites, great mops of fuzzy hair adorned and kirtled with hibiscus and alamander, laughing eyes, and happy as fawns. Then onward, climbing over coral boulders and limestone ridges, following a garden track through tall Lalang grasses, waving their silvery plumes in the breeze, following down to the sylvan shades of gullies, overtangled with creepers, through high arching sago palms to the bed of the creek, wading through purling waters, cool and crystal, overhung with creepers and slender palms waving feathery crests in azure skies. Here lay a perfect paradise of orchids carpeted with ferns, mosses, and lichens growing in endless variety and exuberance. Bright-hued birds and gorgeous butterflies, glorified by silvery sunbeams, filtering through the green canopy, flitted like fairies through this enchanted Eden.

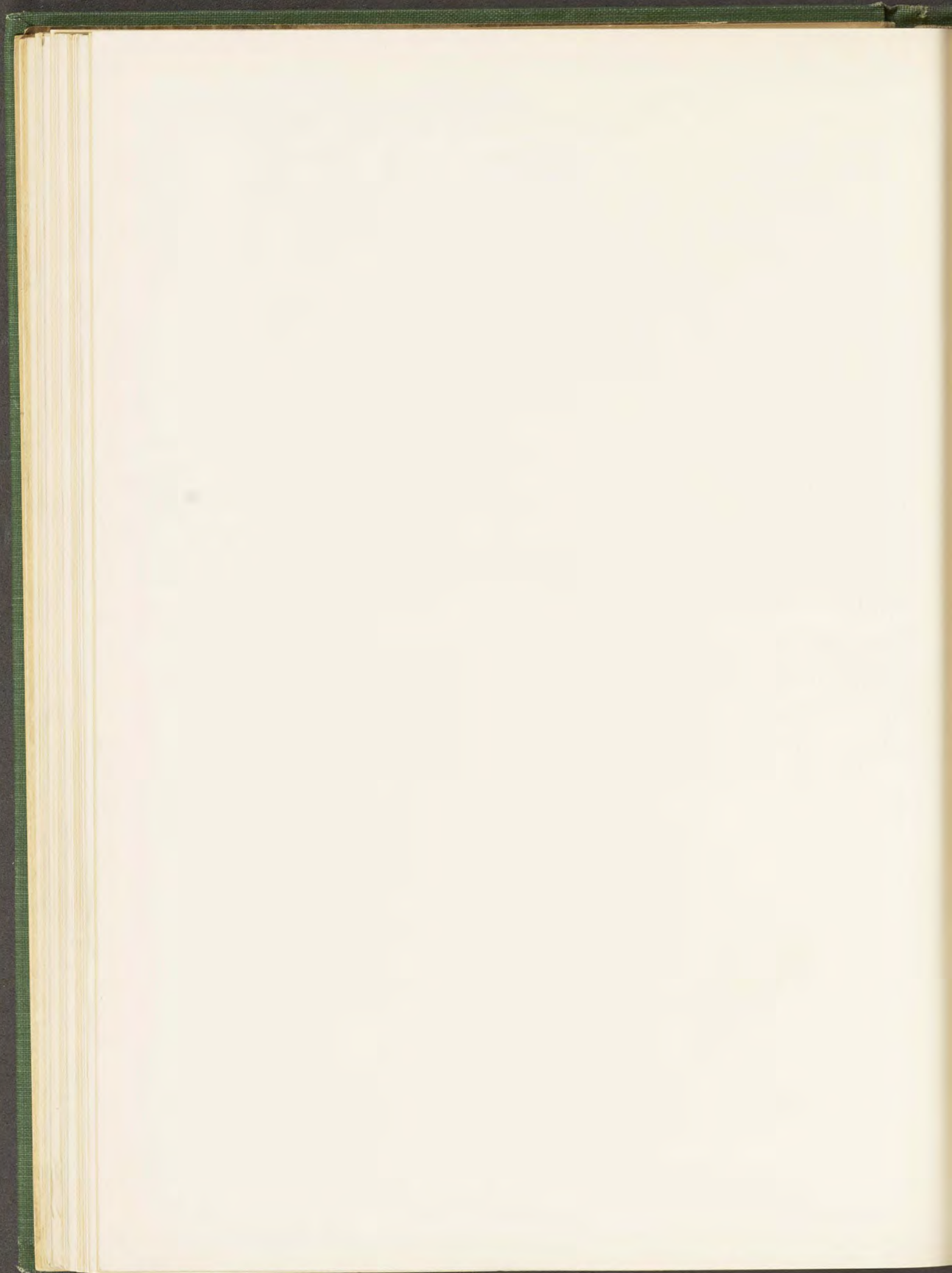
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When the sun sank beyond the ridges I emerged from out the forest gloom on to the shores of Goodenough Bay, and, following a well-beaten track, arrived at the Menapi Mission Station, where I found the proverbial New Guinea hospitality extended to me. Next day, in the exalted company of several reverend gentlemen and a crew of mission boys—saints in nothing but name—we crossed the Galilee of Goodenough Bay, and, coming close under the jagged peaks of the southern coast, drew into the calm waters of Boianai.

Faintly the bells of Boianai came pealing across the bay, calling the faithful to evensong, and livening our hearts with their gladsome melody. As we drew near a great crowd collected on the small pier, and in the midst their padre, whom all love and revere. Boianai is the exhibition station of the Angli-

Two views of the coral reef off Dauko Island. The range of colours baffles description and resembles a vast flower garden. In the lower picture is a giant clam, one of the thousand perils which menace the pearl diver. At the slightest touch these monster traps close suddenly with sufficient force to snap a man's leg. Some of them attain a length of four feet and a weight of five hundred pounds.





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cal mission, and the Reverend H. Gill is one of the most capable of their clergy.

Here I had ample opportunity of observing the remarkable degree of attainment effected upon a primitive race by moral suasion and scientific development. Gill, in himself, is a unique character—a combination of spiritual and mechanical genius, which particularly adapts him for evangelization, as well as practical teaching and development. Without exercising dogmatism, the magnetism of his personality exerts a sub-conscious control over the native mind, and his influence is manifest by the betterment of his people ethically, mentally, and practically. Boianai is his hobby and the pride of those who dwell there. The gravelled paths that lead to model villages and improved homes are trod by model and improved people. I found an interesting character in his own home, where in spare moments his mechanical self has found relaxation in bizarre yet clever innovations.

A bachelor seated at his own table finds inconvenience in having to wait upon himself. Gill has solved the problem by causing the table-top to revolve, so that viands on the far side may be brought within easy reach. Guests find the round table an inconvenience, as their dish may go wandering the table circuit at any odd moment. By pulling a string the table-lamp dances around the room to any desired spot or level. Cupboards open from nowhere, spring snakes hop from everywhere, and a syren which I blew inadvertently, brought the whole village and school tumbling out at the double. I had sounded the alarm!

Over 130 children are taught the King's English at Boianai Mission School, and a similar number are taught at more remote villages. It is time, however, that the Papuans had a primer of their own, for the standard Australian reader, which teaches of furs, gloves, bonnets, and other unknown and un-

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thinkable objects of civilisation, confounds both native teacher and pupil. I have seen simple arithmetic set on the black-board soliciting the value of so many gowns at no unreasonable price, bewilder a class; but when the gowns were altered to grass skirts, the native intellect calculated quicker than my own!

Three things alone mitigate the loneliness of the mission stations—visitors, the mail, and the box of Christmas presents. I was at the opening of a 1920 Christmas box in May, 1921, and was just as anxious to learn of its mysterious contents as the padre and the flock that crowded around. Tracts in endless variety, texts and religious pictures in profusion, toilet soaps, and small boxes of fancy biscuits—kind givers might observe that biscuits should be sealed up, for the penetrating fumes of certain toilet soaps have a strange affinity for biscuits, and one froths violently at the mouth after eating and vomits soapsuds; books of gaudy fabric samples, several pairs of moth-eaten socks, a large clump of deliquescent sweets—lollies should be sent in tins or bottles so that they may not become mixed with the Bibles and Epsom salts; many tins given by benefactors—too old to be sold, and blown out both ends like their generosity—several bags of useless kindness from which plagues of weevils had nibbled all charity; sundry pairs of unmentionables, ancient in cut, and with seats as threadbare as their givers' magnanimity; a bundle of worn-out toothbrushes, cockroaches galore, a nest of wee mice, and many other things besides.

This is a sample of present day charity "That blesseth him that gives and him that takes" very dubiously. But at the bottom is a large sealed tin—a cake from home. "What matters the rest? The old folks never forget my birthday; but, good heavens, this was sent a year ago, and should have been here June, 1920! Anyhow the sight of it recalls fair memories and makes me feel a year younger."

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But hark! The bells of Boianai are pealing, ringing joyously in measured eights. There's going to be a wedding and so the bells strike glad octaves, chiming the harmonies and discords of life's replete span.

5

I bade farewell to good friend Gill, an inexpressibly lonely figure standing on the foreshore surrounded by his grass skirted flock, and headed south-east over the reef-strewn seas on the long voyage to Mailu Island on the South Coast, where I arrived five days later.

Girdled by foaming reefs, the parched brown highlands and bluffs of Mailu depress one with their harshness and inhospitality, a feature which seems to have impressed itself upon the natives and temperaments of the inhabitants. The barrenness of the land renders it incapable of supporting the population, and so the people are compelled to seek other than agricultural pursuits. The islanders are great traders, and they carry out their business by sea, mostly exchanging armshells and cooking pots (the latter manufactured from the local clay) with the natives along the mainland seaboard for comestibles.

The Mailu possess well-proportioned seaworthy canoes, provided with the characteristic "crab claw" sail, and as these vessels can sail close to the wind, trading expeditions, east and west, are possible. Being astute and keen traders, they not only barter their own goods for the things they require, but they also act as middlemen, distributing articles brought from the East as far as the Trobriands and exchanging them to great advantage as far west as the Aroma villages.

The population reside in a regular well-constructed village, built at the apex of a secluded crescent-shaped bay, beneath the eastern slopes of the island. The houses are arranged in two parallel rows with a street thirty feet wide down the centre,

The Torres Straits are littered with coral reefs ranging in size from the Great Barrier Reef of Australia, which extends a distance of 1250 miles along the Queensland coast, to the tiniest sprig of coral rock thrusting its way through the surging sapphire waters. Each reef is a universe in itself—crowded with dazzling life and splotched with brilliant colour. Sea anemones, giant clams, brilliant marine crabs and glittering fish, striped and banded with all the colours of the spectrum, move and flash through the faint green depths. The reefs themselves resemble giant gardens where the blossoms are stone and the living creatures are fish of flame. It is on these clusters of extravagant beauty that many a proud ship has ripped her steel plates and sunk beneath the waters of the Straits.



THE SUBMARINE GLORY OF A CORAL REEF, UNEXCELLED FOR BEAUTY AMONG ALL THE SPECTACLES OF THE UNIVERSE



MISSIONARIES AND BARBARIANS

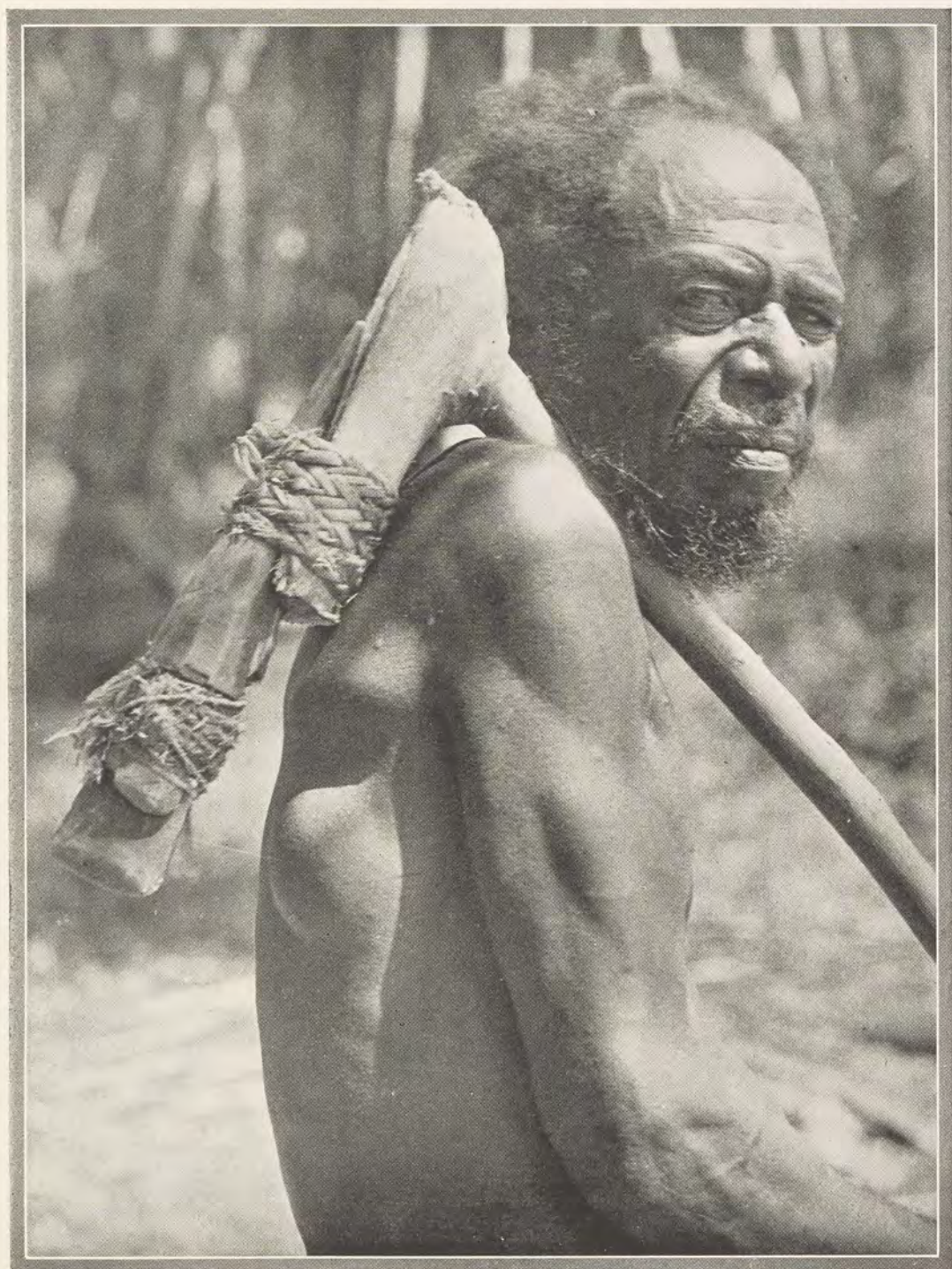
which is kept clear of work and human obstruction; hordes of children, herds of swine, and packs of mongrels being exempt from this rule. The women occupy their time making pottery, basketware, and mats, plaiting sails, and in household duties; while the men engage their attention making and overhauling canoes or manufacturing armshells, sapisapi, and other shell ornaments for the impending trading season.

The Mailu houses closely resemble huge beehives raised upon piles, and the tenants are scarcely less prolific, comprising as many generations as are living in the male line, together with their wives and children! Contrary to what might be expected of relations, all dwell together in a condition of domestic felicity, though it will be noted that only people related in blood on the agnatic side comprise the household.

The tenement contains one living room formed by a floor and the arch-shaped roof, and also a lower platform roofed by the floor above and open on all sides. The upper room boasts neither windows nor doors, access being through a small square hole in the floor, a ladder consisting of a board with footholes being used to scale up to it. The furnishings are of the most simple design, a small sleeping mat plaited from the leaves of the pandanus palm and thin logs of wood for pillows—that's all. The natives bathe frequently, probably more with the desire to keep cool, than to remove the dirt; excepting when they are obliged to restrain, through mourning or other ceremonial observances. At all times however, they exhale a characteristic odour, not altogether pleasant, which is heightened by the artificial scents of offensive aromatic herbs.

The care of hair appears to be the only important toilet activity through Papua. The large, mop-like chevelure is freely shampooed with squeezed coconut, and then pricked up with a small comb which normally is worn in the hair as an ornament. It is rather ambiguous to remark that the women

Waragi, the Stoic. He placed no confidence in talk and his answers to civil questions were simply a series of non-committal grunts. Each day he came to the ship-building field, near the government rest house at Coira to work on his canoe with the crude adze which he carries over his shoulder—a primitive implement which his conservative nature preferred to the steel axes of the white man. The adze is cleverly constructed so that each blow moved the stone blade more firmly into place. Waragi offered no objection to being photographed nor did he betray the slightest enthusiasm for the process, chewing betel-nut indifferently throughout the process.



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of Mailu wear the trousers, for the men don little more than the traditional fig leaf, whilst half a dozen or so grass skirts girdled about the loins of the gentler sex suggest the associations of the crinoline.

In times of present-day memory these Amazons of Mailu fought side by side with their men in canoes, and took part in most forays. That spirit of self-reliance still endures, and though the hand may not wield the spear of war, it weaves the sails, makes the pottery, stirs the cooking-pots, and performs most of the sundry odd jobs upon which the male is entirely dependent. The Mailu woman has a tender heart that needs cajoling; to drive her by force is to drive her to strike; and, with haughty swish of grass skirts to return to father. It will take numerous pigs to buy her back, and many more to reinstate the wayward spouse into her good graces again. So the Mailu woman has much of her own way, and boasts more freedom than most of her overburdened sisters throughout Papua.

6

Within the Mailu village, I discovered that there are several clans, whose existence I can only explain by a desire on the part of the natives to keep up the stock by a constant mingling of new bloods. Within the confines of a single village where constant intermarriage threatens to become a menace, these clans operate as much as possible toward an amelioration of this difficulty. In other words, the sons of one clan must by law seek their wives from a different clan. It is forbidden to marry within their own clan. The girls become automatically a part of the clan into which they marry and the men remain always in the clan into which they are born.

Here as elsewhere throughout the Papuan area, pigs have

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taken the place of the cannibalistic viands forbidden by the white administration. The pig is a cherished possession and is considered a delicacy only worthy of the greater feasts and ceremonials.

Time with these easy-going sons of nature counts for nothing, and observation which more than once during my wanderings I had good cause to regret. In Mailu, the day is divided roughly into several periods, determined by the position of the sun. There is "Daba" which means morning, "Nina Atsai" which is midday, and "Valavitsa" which means late afternoon. During the heat of the day, no native stirs himself. More than once, I have engaged native crews or carriers to report to me at a certain hour of the day . . . say one o'clock. Such an order, it seems, means less than nothing. Invariably they turned up smiling and good-humoured four hours after the appointed time, without the thought of an apology because it had never occurred to them that four hours could be precious to a white man endeavouring to cover a vast amount of territory within a definite period of time.

"Four hours. . . . Four hours nothing!"

That was their way of considering a delay. I fancy most of them had no idea of what an hour was. They computed their lives rather by days. There is nothing to hurry or worry them, nothing to make them hasten to try and retard the speeding hours of time.

The trading experience of the Mailus has trained into them a strong sense of commerce and desire always to have the better of a bargain. They would scarcely think of parting with property as a gift; something is invariably expected in return.

Mr. Saville, the missionary at Mailu, told me several amusing stories in this connection.

"At the time of the monthly offering to the church," he

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said, "several natives brought contributions which they deposited in due form. But instead of going on their way, they stood about clearly in expectation of something. When I questioned one old man, he told me with some heat the little party was awaiting gifts in return for those they had brought to the church!"

The life of Mr. Saville and his wife among these people must be an ungrateful one. It falls within the duties of Mrs. Saville to act as physician to the sick and wounded Mailus who regard as a high favour the privilege of dressing their wounds. They actually ask for "kuku" (tobacco) in return for the privilege!

Despite these qualities, or perhaps because of them, the Mailu village is one of the finest I encountered. Pictures present themselves at every turn and corner. The stately row of houses facing the beach between the coral reef and the shore with fine canoes riding in the shallow part offshore and the crab-claw sails coming and going, provides one of the most entrancing pictures of the real, untransformed, Papua.

7

In order to save much valuable time—the coastal communications being quite impossible in this respect—I continued the voyage of 200 miles to Port Moresby in a small auxiliary launch, calling in en route at numerous places of interest to film and study the people. With bellying sail and wind-raised crests, harboured from the wrath of Pacific seas by the Barrier Reef offshore, the prospects of a wild and romantic coast lent not a moment to monotony. Hills, ranges and peaks, mamelon and sloping spurs, verdured in perpetual glossy green; beaches palm-fringed with thin columns of smoke betraying the presence of man, and in the far hinterland, behind this charming

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

scenery, the steep frowning acclivities of the Owen Stanley range, kissed by the fleecy mists that ride the azure skies.

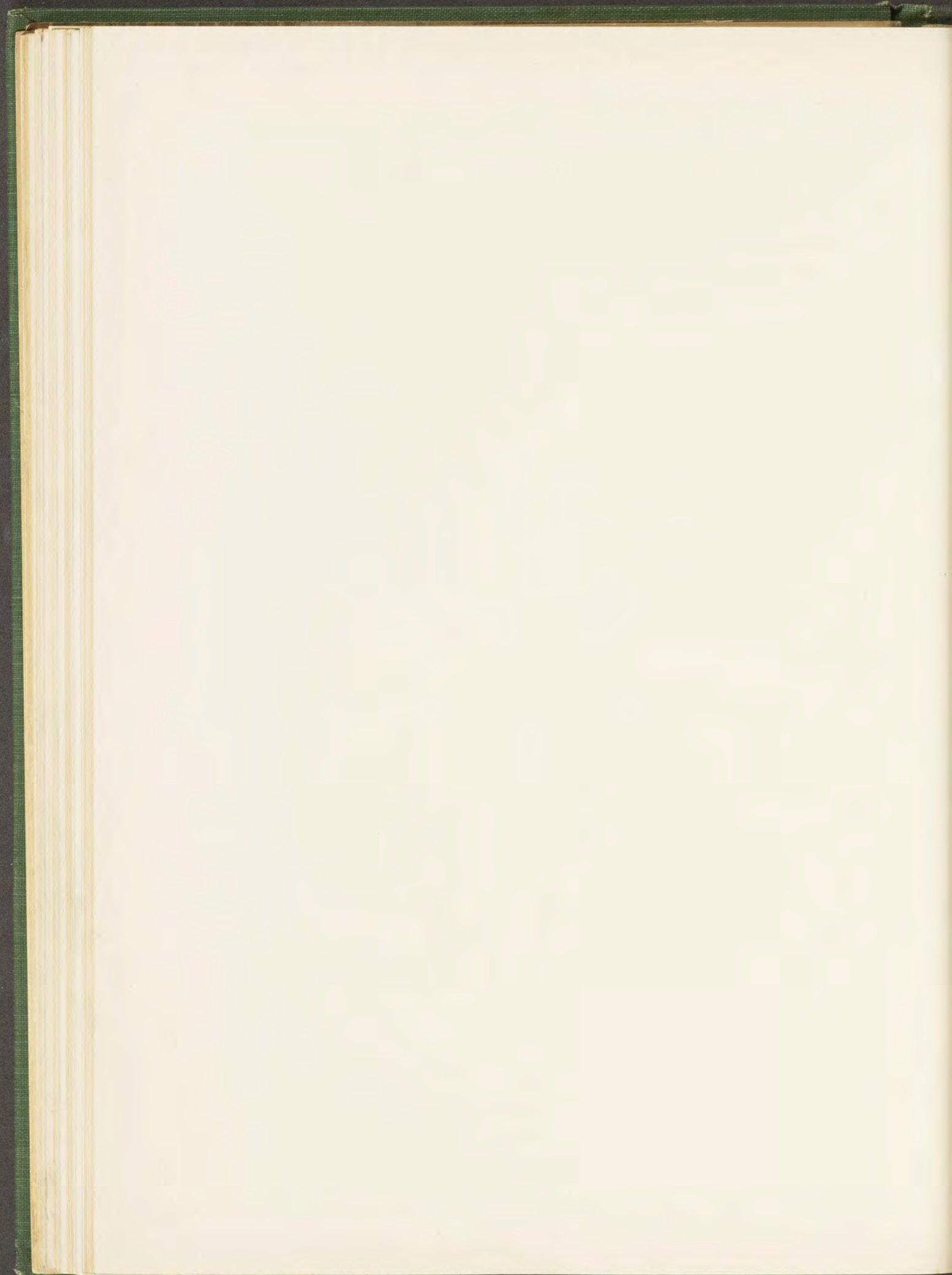
The Barrier Reef turns close inshore off Hood Point, compelling even the smallest craft, except canoes, to take to the open sea, and, as the long, undulating swell of the south-east monsoon was rolling up the coast, it was with glad hearts and emotional stomachs that we came off the narrow passage that leads to the calm waters by Hula. This treacherous entrance is barely a score of yards wide, and in the heavy weather which was running only to be negotiated by skilful seamanship and local knowledge. Fortunately my coxswain was a Hula native of ability, and whilst he controlled the steerings I attended to the engines. Angry white combers were breaking over the reefs and surging wildly through the narrow gap—for my part I observed no gap, but a seething cataract of waters, into which we headed. Borne on a spuming crester, with the maelstrom hurtling its eddies across the reef and all around us, like a plaything we were flung forward and, when it seemed that the little vessel must be dashed on to the reefs, burst through the treacherous gauntlet into the calm beyond.

What a contrast! Ahead a vast lake with the unique prospect of a large village built upon high piles over serenely calm waters, and astern the bulwarks of the Barrier Reef foaming white with the sprays of angered seas.

In the midst of this Papuan Venice we dropped anchor; the rattle of our chain bringing the aquarians out on to their platforms, and making the dogs to bark, the pigs to grunt, and the fowls to crow, for all dwell together in arklike community and above the tides. Originally to secure themselves from land attack, Hula village was constructed out from the shore, and even though there is nothing to fear from hostile onslaught, the natives still adhere to their ancient customs and traditions of construction and re-building out in the sea.



A WIDOW OF COIRA. THESE WRETCHED WOMEN INSTEAD OF DONNING BLACK BOMBAZINE, TAKE OFF ALL THEIR CLOTHES AND COVER THEMSELVES WITH WHITE PIPECLAY. A MORE MOURNFUL AND REPULSIVE SIGHT CAN SCARCELY BE IMAGINED. AS ELSEWHERE IN PAPUA, THE MOURNING FOR A HUSBAND COVERS A PERIOD OF MORE THAN A YEAR DURING WHICH PIPECLAY IS THE CONVENTIAL DRESS. BATHS ARE UNKNOWN AND MORE CLAY IS ADDED ONLY AS IT RUBS OFF. THE ONLY THING WHICH CAN BE SAID FOR THIS MOURNING CUSTOM IS THAT IT IS SUPERIOR TO THE SIMILIAR CUSTOM AMONG THE WOMEN OF KAIMARE WHO USED THE SLIMY RIVER MUD INSTEAD OF PIPECLAY



MISSIONARIES AND BARBARIANS

Twelve hundred natives reside in Hula city, and as they sense not inconveniences, and don't keep club hours and habits, their method of abode has much to commend it from the point of hygiene, scarcity of mosquitoes, and fishing conveniences. I know of an old native who always lays him down to rest with a baited hook let down through a hole in the floor, with the line hitched around his big toe. He is always certain of numerous bites through the night, even though they be only vermin, which I found extremely abundant.

Communication with the shore is effected by the aid of canoes and with the houses by scrambling up very rickety ladders on to an insecure platform of fragmentary timbers and saplings. As these are simply laid down unsecured, and frail saplings span the chasms between the houses for neighbourly intercourse, one requires an intimate knowledge of how each timber will behave when trod upon. I found the method of all fours safe, slow and sure. Pigs and dogs are units in the social community, and it is no uncommon sight to observe a fine fat porker reposing its head on My Lady's lap; a mangy dog engaging the attention of one arm and the other hand directed alternately to stirring the cooking-pot and holding the baubau (pipe) whilst baby scampers over the ramshackle platform with an 18-foot drop into the water below. The old man spends most of his time fishing, scratching the sod, and diligently loafing.

There are several similar, though smaller, aquatic villages on the way to Port Moresby, though the fleeting hours precluded me, against my desires, from visiting them.

The hills of Port Moresby when I had last seen it several months ago, were bright with emerald grasses. Now upon re-entering its stately portal, I found it difficult to recognize the place. The wet season had passed, and since then the glaring equatorial sun had parched all the landscape desolate

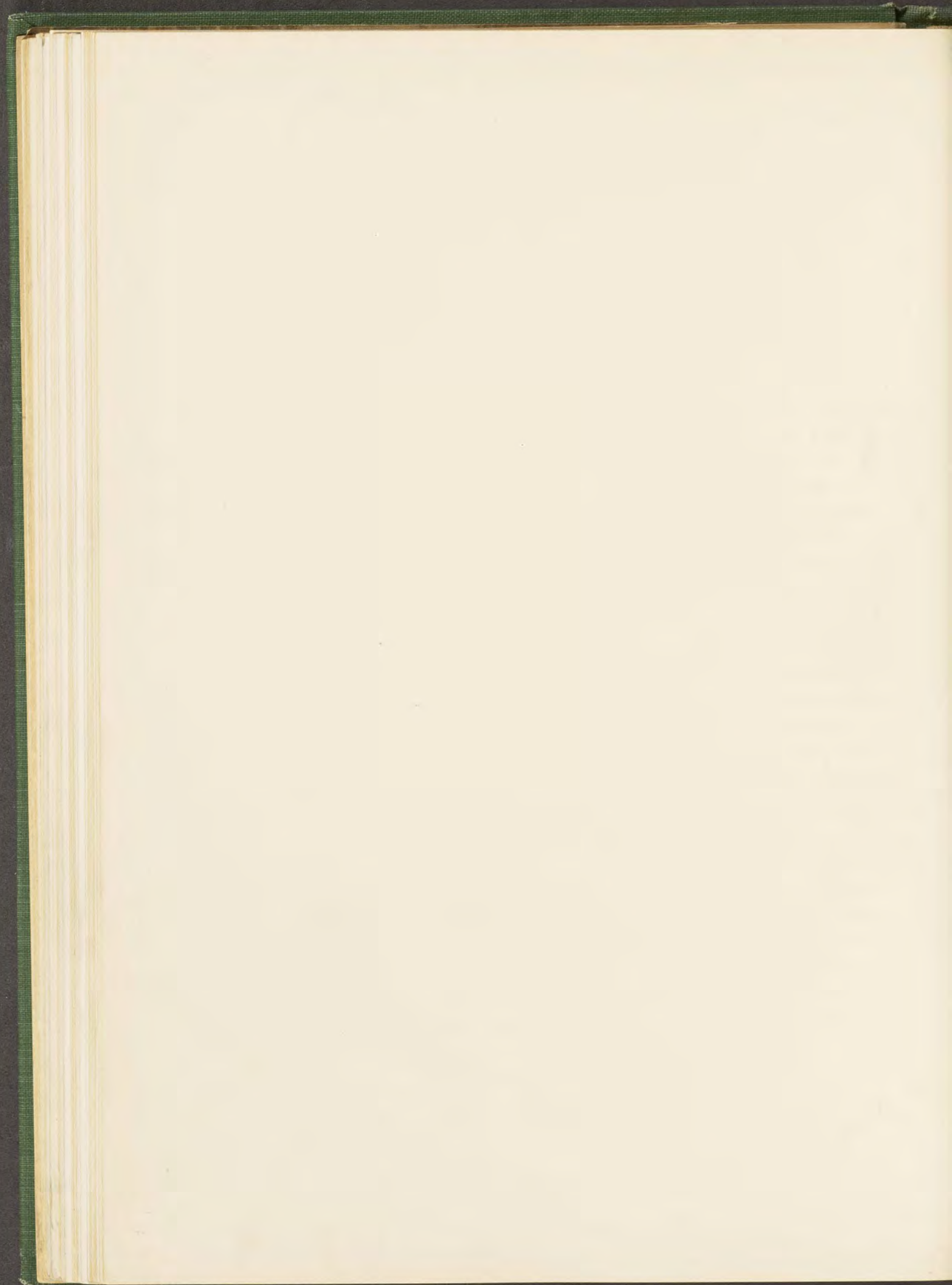
PEARLS AND SAVAGES

and barren. It would be difficult to find a more inhospitable township than this village of goats and corrugated iron. Judging from the appearance of the former, they must have made a steady and ravenous diet off the latter. It is a mean place and the headquarters of the Papuan Administration.

CHAPTER IV

THE CYCLE OF A CORAL REEF

BLOSSOMS OF STONE AND FISH OF FLAME



CHAPTER IV

1

I AM seated 'neath palmy shade on a high dune looking over the flats of Dauko and the emerald shallows of my coral lagoon. A south-east zephyr fans the calm rippling wavelets along the beach—rustling the shells in soothing lullaby. Yonder the swell of the old Pacific foams the reef, wafting a time-old anthem—a song of Empire. The breeze, a care-free rover, whispers a lure to the heart, as he tarries to wave the fronds that shelter me, in greeting, ere he goes. On the beach below, Friday croons as he kindles the fire, and while the billy boils, McCulloch and our native friends are out in the shallows, netting the evening meal.

We came here in a native canoe with a crew of six burly fellows who sailed us from the jetty at Port Moresby out into the churning, open sea. The local crafts of Hanauabada village are remarkable for their sailing, and the natives for their adroitness in handling them. The canoe is a hollow dug-out, thirty to forty feet long, to which is attached an outrigger by means of a number of spreader poles. The whole affair is securely lashed with vines and native rope. The sails now are made principally of canvas, which detracts from their pictorial effect but adds greatly to their efficiency. The sail, shaped like the claw of a crab, is merely held by a sprit which fits into a grummet at the peak of the sail and which is secured to the

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

mast by a lashing. The mast stands upright, or tolerably so, supported by stays. The steering is done by means of a large spear-shaped paddle, and when sailing close to the wind, another paddle is pushed down between the canoe platform and the hull itself serving the purpose of a fin.

The least breeze moves the craft along, and even in the highest winds the canoes are remarkably seaworthy. The sails are seldom reefed, and the canoe is saved from overturning by the crew balancing their weight on the outrigger against the wind pressure on the sails. It is an extremely exhilarating sport and forms the chief diversion of the whites at Port Moresby, who hire the vessels for Saturday afternoon regattas. The canoes are faster than our own sailing craft and equally as manageable.

Dauko is much the same as any coral island, a plain expanse of coral sandrock, eroded by the waves into a fantastic shore, with here and there a gap spanned by silvery sands. The breeze sways the straggling palms scattered along the foreshores, and all around is an emerald sea, that flashes sapphire, turquoise, opal, until the evening comes and flares it gold. Even now, as I write, the sun dips low. For a moment he loiters on the rim, as if to gloat upon the blazonry of his trail, and then with grand pomp, sets below to waken other lands. The heavens flame with rosy splendour; the wavelets, like ripples from a furnace lake, gild the beach. Fainter, feebler, fades the afterglow; then the world grows grey.

Friday's fire burns homely on the beach; the palms throw silhouettes against the star-studded night, and the canoe, with my strange companions, comes home. Our couch is the coral sand; our roof the glittering heavens; our lamp the moon, that raises her crescent above the palms. The natives gather round the camp fire, and we talk to them of cities, people, and so-called civilization. They listen fascinated, and wish to see it all.



A GIRL OF WANIGELLA, DISPLAYING THE LATEST CREATIONS IN TAPA CLOTH. THIS MATERIAL IS MADE FROM THE BEATEN-OUT BARK OF THE WILD MULBERRY TREE WHICH UNDER THE WOODEN MALLETS OF THE ARTISANS ATTAINS AN EXTRAORDINARY SOFTNESS OF TEXTURE. IT IS DECORATED IN ORIGINAL DESIGNS BY THE USE OF VEGETABLE DYE, AND SAVE FOR STRAY BITS OF CALICO BROUGHT IN BY TRADERS, IS THE ONLY CLOTH THE NATIVES HAVE



THE CYCLE OF A CORAL REEF

Eight P.M.; and in the shelter of a wind screen made by the sails of the giddy canoes, under the star-studded canopy of heaven, we talk to the natives of the white people and their busy lives on the other side of the world, of their far-off wonders, of their shops and houses.

Eight P.M. . . . The cities are flocking to theatres and cinemas to gaze upon shadows . . . shadows of things being acted; and here on Dauko we are living a real life, free and happy. All this; and on the other side, life in a city flat! Good Heavens! What a contrast! One wonders if our civilization is all that we think it is. If I were a savage without ambition, which after all accounts for most of the miseries of life, I would not seek to be more than that—a wild, free, child of nature rather than a serf of civilization.

The fire burns. My native brothers listen hypnotized to the incredible tales of great cities and moving pictures, theatres and traffic jams. The sea laps softly on the beach.

2

So the fire burns low, and coiled in our blankets we seek to penetrate the unplumbed depths between the stars and to examine our consciences. I was startled awake by something tugging at my hair, and hastily grabbing, a large crab about hand-size, scampered off. I wakened McCulloch with the glad tidings, and switching on the torch discovered the beach alive with crabs. It was an extraordinary sight. There were literally thousands of them moving across the beach toward the water.

They scattered to new burrowed holes as I jumped up, but McCulloch, drowsily turning over, dreamily remarked that they were perfectly harmless, being merely Ocypode Ceratophthalma. As this also adequately expressed my feelings, I fell to sleep again, only to awaken as the crabs again began to

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

reconnoitre in increased force. They scurried and crawled over us, while we drew the blankets over our heads. The natives had had enough of inquisitive crabs scuttling over their bare skins and they strolled away in the midnight moonlight to net fish. Even the gentle scientist grew "crabby" when I ventured a pun about his harmless little nippers. We kindled a big fire of driftwood and sat in the glow, preferring its scorching heat to the playful caprices of our "harmless" intruders, who regarded us in a great army of beady eyes from just beyond the fireglow.

When the sun uprose from his radiant cloud couch, flooding the world with prismatic colours, we strolled along the beach and observed the natives making their last cast with the net. The procedure was simple yet efficient. The net, merely a long strip four to five feet wide, is weighted along one edge with shells and buoyed along the opposite with floats made from light driftwood. The water was being smacked and beaten violently to scare the abundant fish, inducing them to retreat to the cover of the nearest coral knoll. The net was then hastily run around the knoll, which was prodded to expel the refugees, and the fish, seeking to dart to safer cover, were gilled in the net. A large number of fine fish were netted by this simple expedient and great was the rejoicing of the inner man thereat. The fish just as they came from the sea were placed in a can of sea-water and brought to the boil. When cooked the skin readily peeled off with the scales and the inwards were removed.

Of the efficacy of this method I speak in eulogy, the flavour being of fish, not of preservative; nor of that detestable odour which offends when the tin lid is removed.

My coral garden is a small one; but a mile or two square—scarcely worth considering amongst the thousands of square miles which fringe the Queensland coast for a distance of over

THE CYCLE OF A CORAL REEF

twelve hundred miles. Yet in every square foot, nay in every square inch, there is more wonder and beauty, than one ever dreamt Creation held. You can walk from Dauko shore waist-deep through tepid waters of crystal sapphire, and tread the paths of silver sand amongst the coral beds. You hold your breath in wonder! The glorious flower garden, with its million blooms, and its gay birds, is second to the fairy dream-land around. Underfoot shoals of dazzling-hued fishes dart in flashing showers to the safe retreat of the coral antlers and grottos. Look at the myriads of timid little eyes staring back at you. The coral clump is their home, you may even break it off and lift it from the water. Yet the tiny fishes will not vacate their refuge.

Here is a garden of madrepora corals of every tint that autumn knows. There are clumps of delicate pink, bright blue and verdant green. It is so frail as to break at the slightest touch. Yes, but over yonder along the reef edge there are sturdier corals so hard that they can scarcely be chipped with a hammer. They flourish best where the surf breaks over them unceasingly, under conditions that would destroy the most powerful works of man.

McCulloch is the scientific member of the party. To him I turn to discover all that which lies beyond the knowledge of a layman. As I stood in the midst of the coral garden, the crystal water flowing about my bare ankles, I was seized by a desire to know more of the mysteries all about me.

"What is coral?" I asked Mac. "Where are the coral insects I was told of as a child?"

McCulloch, who is always willing to talk with all the zeal of a confirmed scientist, laughed at me.

"Well, Hurley, the story of coral reefs being built by myriads of industrious little insects is a poetic fallacy. It sounds good from the pulpit and is a grand simile for sermons. Here,

The sago palm is the source of food, clothing and shelter to the major portion of the Papuan population. Without this indispensable tree the native could not exist. The making of sago is a tribal rite which takes place periodically with most of the tribe participating in the operation.

In the upper photograph the natives of Emo are at work hewing out the pulpy interior of a fallen sago palm with adzes made of hard wood. Two standing natives are shaping from the sheath of the crown bud buckets and troughs to be used in the operation shown in the second photograph.

The pulpy mixture, after being extracted is placed in a trough and water is poured over it. The starchy portion of the pulp is then dissolved and flows away into a receptacle through a sieve of palm fibre so placed as to remove particles of foreign material. In a second trough the milky fluid is allowed to settle for some hours, at the end of which the water is drawn off leaving behind a thick sticky white paste which is the sago. This in turn is kneaded into a ball and baked in a fire of palm fibre. The process hardens the outer surface and provides an air-tight crust in which the sago keeps for many weeks.

In a sense the whole process is symbolical of the place occupied by the sago palm in the lives of the natives; for all the apparatus used in the manufacture of sago is made from the fallen trees . . . the troughs, the buckets, the sieves . . . everything.



TWO STAGES IN THE PROCESS OF MAKING SAGO



THE CYCLE OF A CORAL REEF

look through my magnifying glass at these tiny flower-like forms."

The glass brought into the range of vision a glorious little blossom. Similar blossoms appeared in each microscopic pore of the coral, peering from tiny caverns.

"Surely," I protested, "they are not vegetable."

"No," replied my friend. "These flower-like forms are the coral polyps. They are true animals of the consistency of thin jelly. They are able to extract the lime from the sea-water and secrete it about themselves as hard stony skeletons. It is one of the sublime provisions of nature which enables the coral polyp to protect its soft body from the buffeting of the waves."

What wonders the glass revealed! The most minute specks which I lifted from the reef became objects of awe. Each was a tiny world in itself. And then I began to understand for the first time how men like Mac were willing to spend years in studying one patch of coral reef; they found there within a few square feet as much variety, as many wonders as I have encountered in travels which led me from the South Pole to Jerusalem, from France to the heart of New Guinea. The scientist works in miniature, the explorer in continents—yet one world is as diverse and wonderful as the other.

3

But quick! There is a shoal of gorgeous chromis of phosphorescent blue, and a coterie of gaily banded chætodons. In a dull-lit cavity nestles a colony of sea-urchins with bristling spines, ready to sting at the slightest provocation; yet the small green fishes with gay red bandings dart betwixt the spines for refuge, unharmed and unheeded. Approach stealthily; there is a giant clam open. The huge vice-like shells measure three feet across. There is enough power in the abductor muscles to break a leg, and many a diver has lost his

The young woman who stands erect is not, as might be supposed, the widow. The two widows are the wretched creatures concealed beneath the canopies of *tapa* cloth.

Among the strange customs and traditions of the New Guinea natives, not any are more varied and grotesque than those which have to do with death. Like most primitive peoples the natives regard death with terror, and unless the individual who dies is very old or a mere infant, the death is attributed to evil spirits. The Papuan enjoys his sorrow. Indeed most of his life is spent in mourning for relatives. It is the widow who suffers most severely.

In Wanigella a woman on the death of her husband disappears from the social life of the community. She takes up her abode on the ground beneath her husband's hut and there she fasts and leads a solitary, taciturn existence for many months, speaking to no one, eating only the most frugal and wretched meals. Once a day she visits the grave of her husband, crawling on her hands and knees beneath a canopy of *tapa* cloth so that no villager shall see her face. The way is led by a relative of the dead man who guides the widow by trailing a staff or spear along the ground.

At the end of a period designated by the nearest relative of the dead husband, the widow casts off her mourning and joins once more in the tribal life. This period varies from a year to eighteen months. As soon as it is over, the widow at once sets about finding a new husband.



WIDOWS OF WANIGELLA



THE CYCLE OF A CORAL REEF

life through being held captive under water by those terrible jaws.

The colouration of the internal organism resembles the gaiety of the peacock's tail; but ever so much more brilliant. Just a touch with the spear point, and the great shells clap together, and jam hard. The spear point has to be broken off before it can be freed. Starfish, like dazzling blue mosaics, litter the sands, and here and there shivers a delicate anemone like a dwarfed tree that shrinks into a hole when touched.

McCulloch draws attention to several small galls about the size of peas on the delicate branches of an exquisite coral. Each gall is almost entirely sealed up. On opening with a knife, a tiny crab is found inside of each. It is a female that in the beginning settled on a coral polyp, and having destroyed its life, she has controlled the growth of the surrounding polyps until a minute globular cavity has grown up around her, and then knitted overhead. The little lady is always at home, for she is imprisoned for the rest of her life.

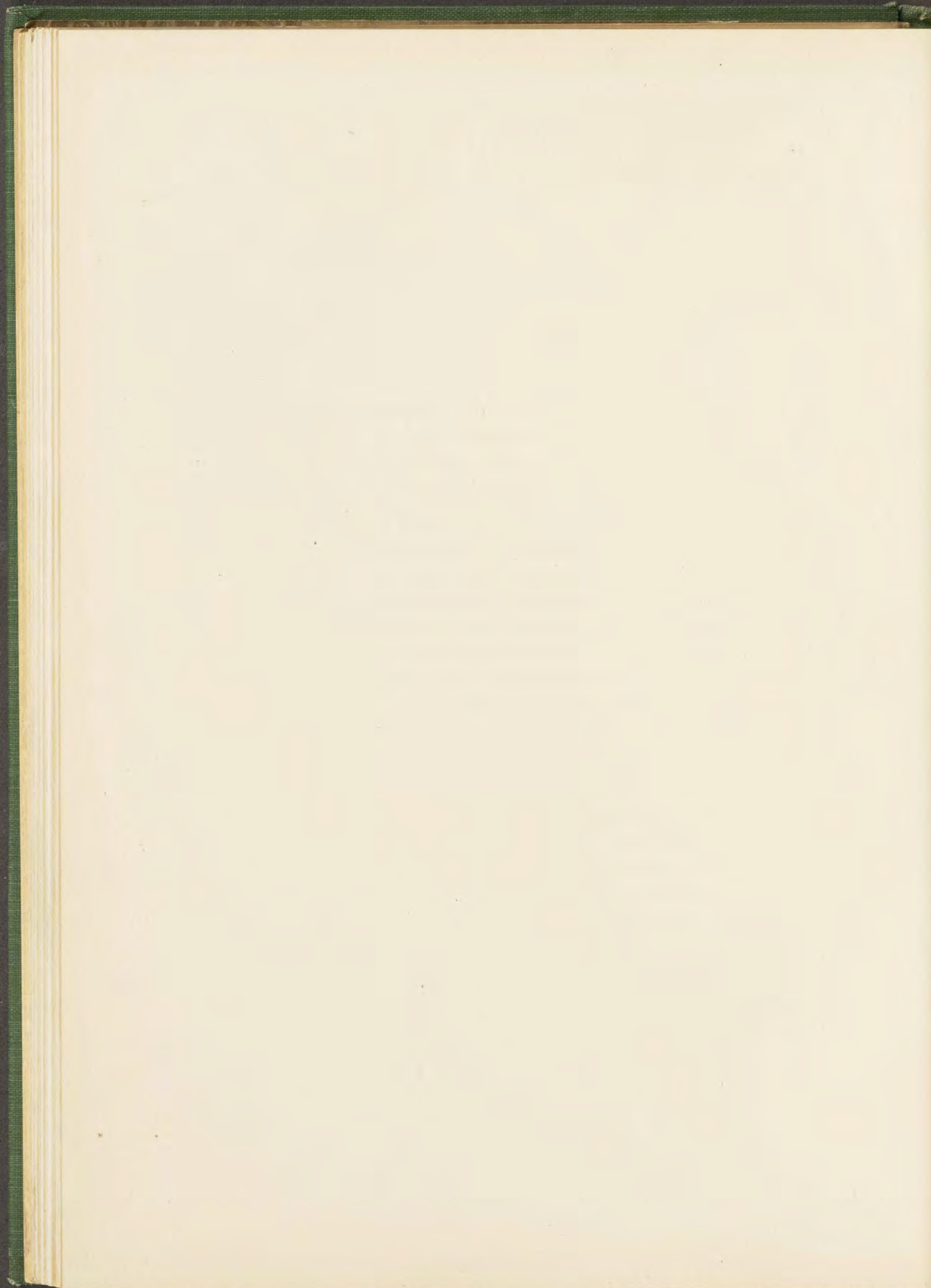
The male is an insignificant little nipper. You have to find him under the microscope. He is a carefree adventurer, that lives on the exterior of the coral, and like the undutiful husband that he is, wanders in home through the pinhole doorway when he feels disposed, happy in the thought that little Missus *Hapalocarcinus Marsupialis*, is helpless either to eject or pursue him. His life would be an ideal one were it not for his wife's name and for the voracious multitudes ever ready to snap him up.

There is a cluster of giant anemones, delicate pink and mauve. They shrink at the touch. If you open them you will doubtless find numerous fishes, diminutive crabs and shrimps in hiding. These are the worst form of parasites. They rob the food from their helpless host, and then when pursued by enemies, seek its shelter!

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

But there are so many things to see that your life would be spent in spellbound hours, studying all these amazing things which the Creator has designed. For what purpose do they exist? He alone knows. Not even the beauty of His work is seen by many. My coral garden is a furious battlefield. It is heavily over-populated, and the struggle for existence is a desperate one. The skeletons of its dead, ground to finest sand by the relentless sea though æons of ages, have built up this island on which the sun smiles, the ocean beats, and life is worth while.

CHAPTER V
WARAGI THE PHILOSOPHIC
COIRA, WANIGELLA AND OROKAIVA



CHAPTER V

1

AT Embeo I camped in one of those numberless rest-houses which the administration has constructed throughout the more peaceful regions of Papua, in every likely place where the traveller might seek refuge for the night. The entrance looks out across a foaming turmoil of waters to the bar, where the muddy swirling outrush of the Opi meets the incoming tide. Only a few weeks ago a man was taken by a crocodile from the doorstep of my hut. They say it was an evil spirit that brought about his doom, and in consequence the whole village has been demolished and moved up-stream at least one hundred yards! When the Evil One returns for another victim he will find the village gone. It would never dare to pursue them, and even if it did, the mourning garb they have assumed and the thumping of the drums would terrify it away! I don't wonder!

There is only a very aged man comes down each day to the old haunts; he is finishing a canoe.

I wish I could understand old Waragi's grunts and jabber; he is such an interesting old scarecrow.

Around his neck dangles a periapt of human teeth, black and gruesome; but Waragi treasures them more than his few remaining years. They symbolize a glorious victory and the fact that he has taken human life. All that was a long time ago, but it still lives fresh in dotard memory. With a deep

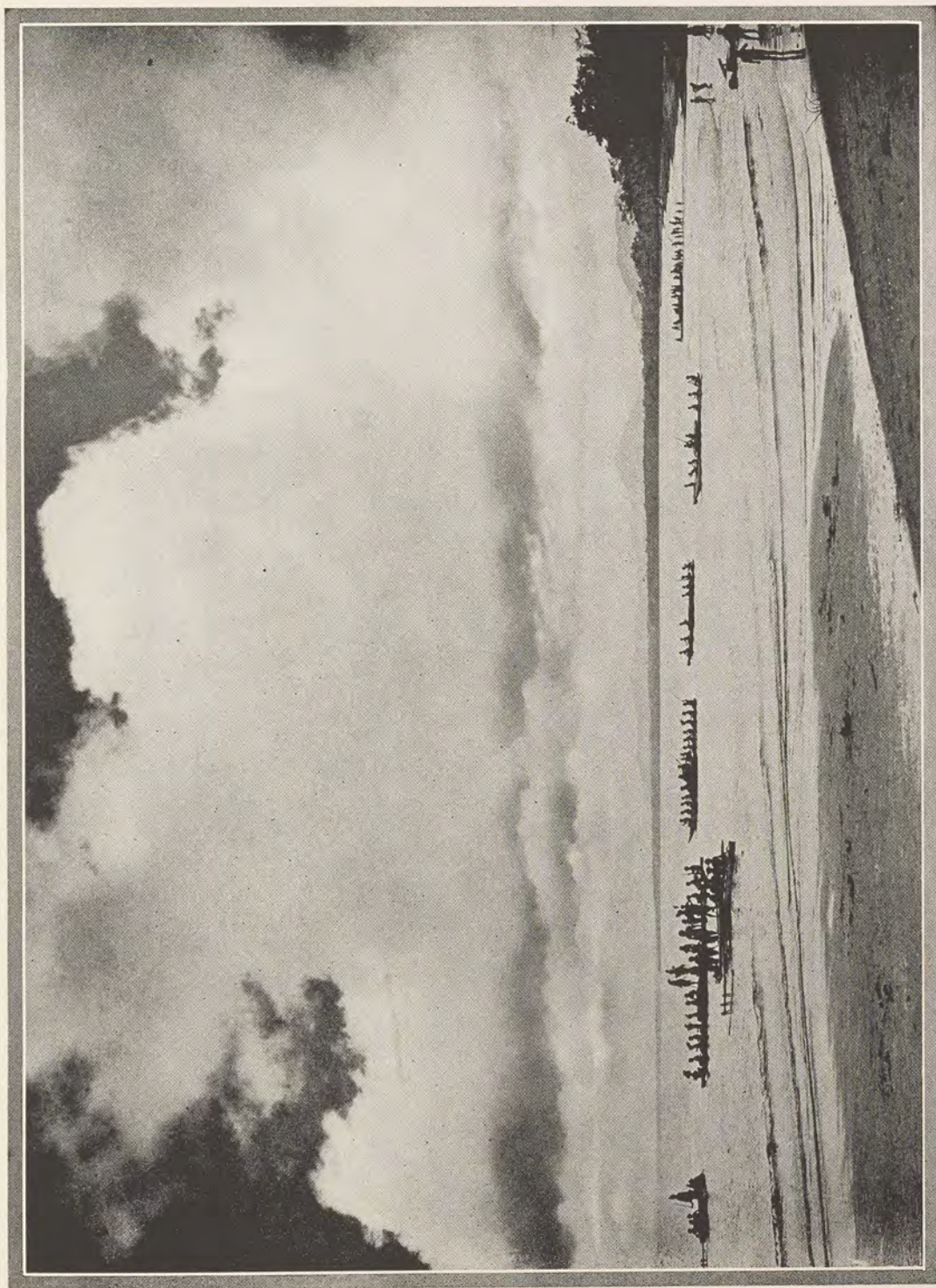
PEARLS AND SAVAGES

sigh he puts down the pipe and opens a little network bag, wherein all the worldly pleasures and treasures are contained—a large gourd made into a lime pot, green peppercorns, betel nut, and a miscellany of very dirty odds and ends. Waragi selects a betel nut, and placing it between his two remaining tusks, screws up his wrinkles into a wry grimace, and cracks it. Then, gnawing out the interior and crunching vigorously, a few fragments of wild pepper are thrown into the orifice to add extra zest. The lime pot cork is withdrawn, and a spatulate stick, after gladly rattling up the interior, is withdrawn and sucked.

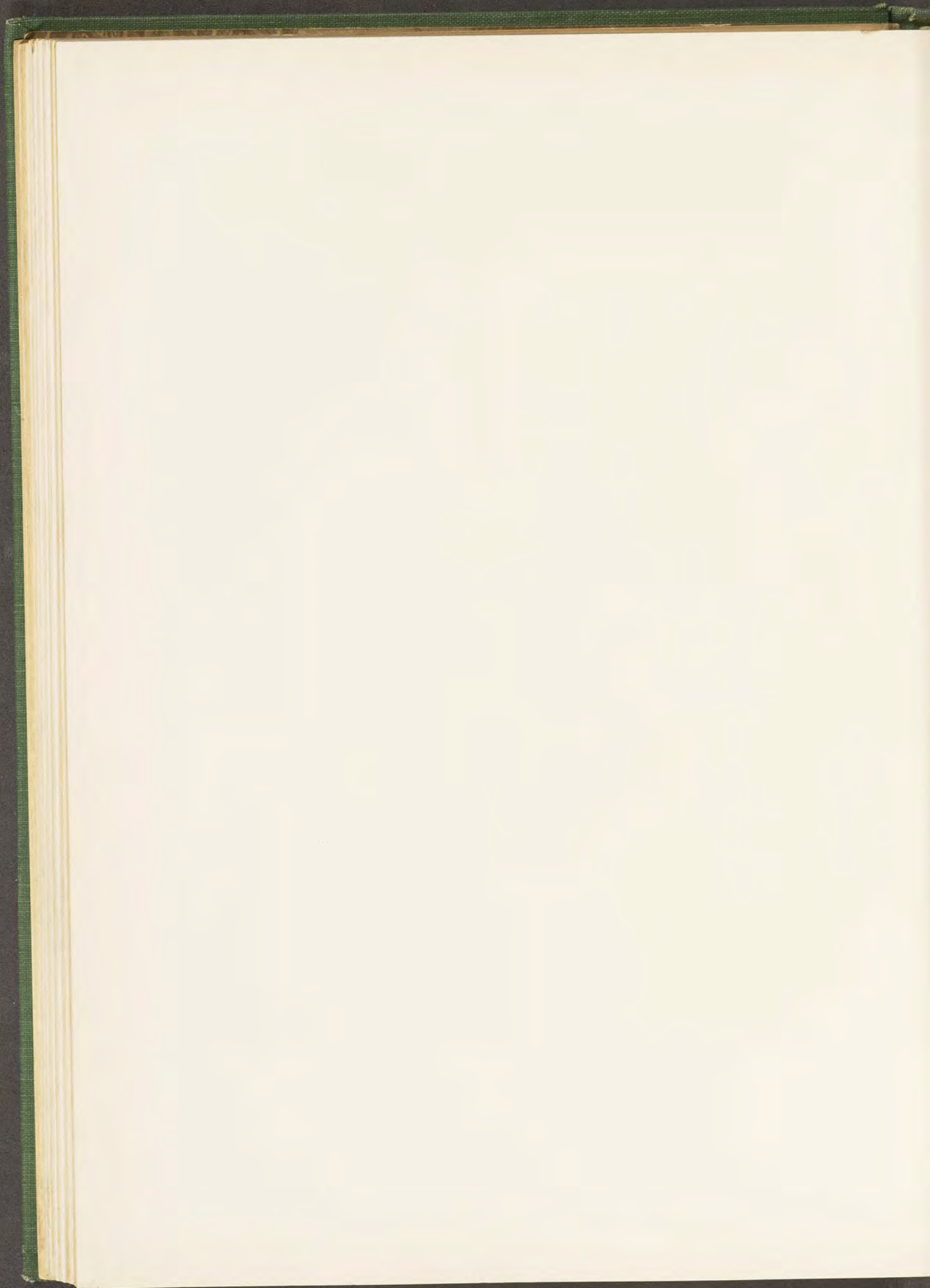
The addition of lime has a strange reaction, and turns the “chew” red and the teeth, after habitual use, jet black. Betel nut is a mild soporific and the chewing is a filthy habit, which is universally practised throughout New Guinea. Intoxicants are practically unknown, but the Papuan ever craves to narcotize himself by chewing betel nut or inhaling deeply of the fragrant weed. The old man’s sons came along and helped him when the canoe was almost finished, and forthwith I chartered it and the owner at two sticks of trade tobacco per day—a stick more than was expected.

When the canoe was finished, a large brush of teasled fibre was attached to the prow to denote that it belonged to a chief. After the quaint ceremony of throwing a stick from stem to stern was performed, several bulbs of Taro were secured to the bows as an offering to the Taro Spirit to guide those voyaging over the waters to safety! Poor simple beings! The villagers lent a hand, and the canoe was launched upon the bosom of the Opi—a crude vessel, which I christened the *Endurance*, after Shackleton’s ill-fated vessel.

McCulloch had brought six raw mission boys from Ambasi to assist us during our wanderings, and after embarking our equipment, they dipped the paddles and we glided out upon the waters which flow through fairyland.



OROKAIVA FISHING FLEET SETTING OUT FOR THE REEFS AT THE BREAKING UP OF THE NORTHWEST MONSOON. VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE COAST LINE OF PAPUA IS GIRDLED BY CORAL REEFS WHICH ACT AS BREAKWATERS AND PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS AREA OF SMOOTH WATER ALONG THE SHORE



WARAGI THE PHILOSOPHIC

2

The more I saw of Papua, the more I realized it to be the most wonderful and unique country of our globe. Nature seems to have made game of all creation. Drifting in old Waragi's canoe, the feeling overcame me again. It was scarcely a place in which to speak, for one's senses were wholly absorbed in contemplating the rapture of all things. Overhead hawsers of vines spanned the narrow river gap in a complex web. Here and there the gorgeous scarlet of the D'Albertis creeper blazed like dazzling flares. Other canoes passed us going down stream laden with produce from their gardens, and ever arose the welcome hail, "Oroda! Oroda!" At last we came to a small clearing hewn from dense forests, and sleeping beneath the shade of graceful betel nut palms lay the huts of Coira Village. The inhabitants were partially awake and, as old Waragi turned the canoe into the bank, came out of their homes drowsily crying, "Oroda! Oroda!"

Coira is a dreamland of nightmares. The inhabitants appear to sleep most of the day, and come out at night to drive away the malignant spirits of their dead. In the centre of Coira stands a small Government rest-house; the portal is ever open—a silent invitation to the weary to come and rest; and so we went inside and made it home. Almost before our chattels were on the threshold the villagers brought quantities of native sago and taro to barter, for they were "starving hungry" for tobacco.

The young moon's crescent peeped above the sago palms and ascended a firmament sparkling with heaven's jewels. All the world was silvered with a gentle lustre, and through wild nature crept an ineffable tenderness. The Opi glided its silvery waters between silhouetted palms, trees, and forest gloom—a glorious mirror glassing the sublimity of the skies.

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

Behind us lay the village, its restless people moving betwixt their huts and fires, around which chattering groups discussed us and the gossip of the village.

It was an eerie scene and one half expected to see the spirits of the dead come scampering back from out the black shadows into the spotlight of moonbeams that sifted through the coconuts. But the terrible hour had not yet arrived, and we observed nothing more dreadful than myriads of scintillating fireflies, flitting like showers of silver sparks, and felt nothing bite us worse than a plague of mosquitoes that drove us to shelter and nightmares beneath our nets.

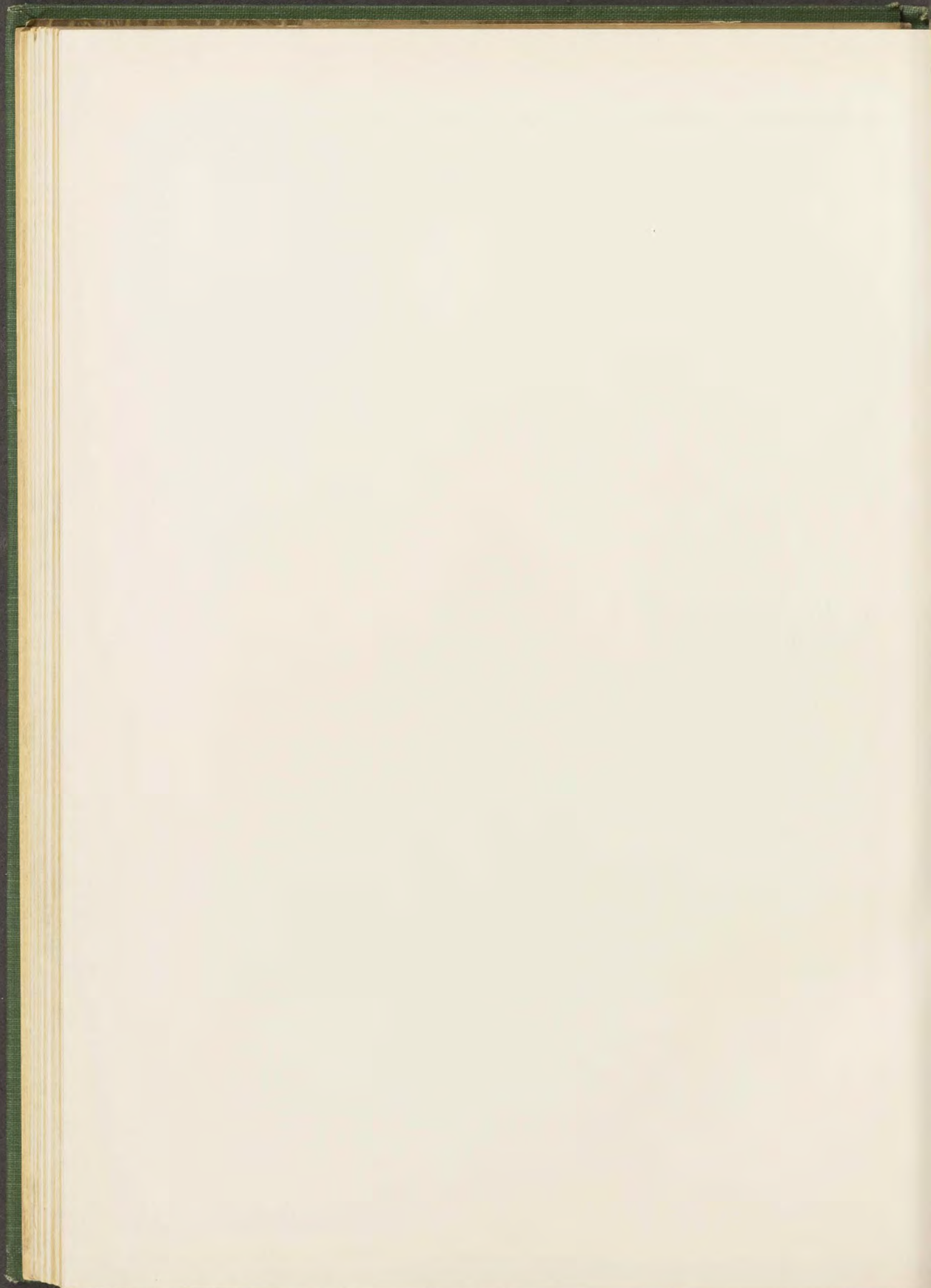
Morpheus held little of sleep or rest for all that night. Scarcely had we retired before the thump! thump! thump! of drums began. At first the noise was pleasant enough, but after the lapse of an hour the measured beating grew wearisome, and every minute but magnified the monotony. Then more drums thumped in, and ear-piercing shrieks, lamentations, and the blood-curdling howls of mongrels rent the atmosphere to bedlam.

I could stand it no longer, and going out on to the verandah, my hair fairly stood on end with the strangeness of the scene that was being enacted around me. A man had been bitten by a spirit! In fact, the poor wretch was ill and in an extremely low condition; his spirit was almost gone from the body, and seated on the platform in front of his house, were hosts of neighbours thumping drums to keep the spirit from leaving the body. Not that the mob cared a deal if the man died or lived, but they were in mortal terror of their own lives; for, should the stricken man die, his spirit would certainly return to torment the village and claim a victim.

Other departed spirits crammed around to wrest from them the life they so noisily protected, but so long as the drums were banged the spirit was held captive in the body, and the



AN OROKAIWA SORCERER. THESE WITCH DOCTORS ARE THE CURSE OF PAPUA AND IN THE MORE PRIMITIVE COMMUNITIES EXERT A BALEFUL INFLUENCE. THIS OLD VILLAIN KEPT AN ENTIRE VILLAGE IN SUBJECTION AND WAS CREDITED WITH HAVING CAUSED THE DEATH BY MAGIC OF VILLAGERS WHO OPPOSED HIM. AMONG THE SUPERSTITIOUS NATIVES, IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT A WITCH-DOCTOR MAY KILL SIMPLY BY SUGGESTION. ONCE A VICTIM WAS SELECTED, THE OLD DEVIL FOLLOWED HIM ABOUT PERSISTENTLY, POINTING AT HIM WITH A CHARMED STICK UNTIL THE WRETCHED NATIVE BECAME ILL AND IN SOME CASES DIED OF TERROR



WARAGI THE PHILOSOPHIC

terrible unseen were impotent. Now and again women snatched up blazing firesticks and rushed screaming at the invisible terror. When I observed numerous white forms tearing and dodging frantically about like apparitions, I came to the conclusion I also was beginning to see things, and decided to terminate the farce.

From my chemical box I brought out half a pound of flash powder, used for instantaneous night photography, and after wrapping it in a black wad of paper and green leaves, informed the bedlam that I intended to drive either the spirits or themselves away. It was a small, harmless-looking parcel; how could it drive spirits away? Little time was left for meditation. I threw the packet on the fire, and made good my escape; and the crowd, sceptical of my powers as a sorcerer, gathered around whilst the fire slowly consumed the outer wrapping.

Then there was a blinding flash and a deep report. It was as though a star-shell had exploded in their midst. Like rockets the firesticks traced a fiery flight; cinders flew in a flaming cloud, and a terrorized yell went up with a simultaneous scattering of frightened natives. The drums ceased and for a while there was a stifled wailing—then all grew still. If ever there was one who appreciated the white man's puripuri, it was the poor sick man, who swallowed a large dose of castor oil, and next day was walking about among his companions. Subsequently I learned that my harmless joke won for me the unenviable reputation of a dimdim puripuri (white-man-sorcerer), and I doubt not it saved a life at the expense of lightly scaring some and deeply scaring many.

3

Next day there was a sullenness in the village, an unusual deference and anxiety to render me assistance. I demanded to

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see the white apparitions which had played a prominent part in the exorcizing ceremony of last night. With considerable reticence several women were brought from their houses thickly coated from head to foot with white clay! The unexpected appearance of these wretched objects was so ludicrous and miserable as to be amusing. They more resembled animate plaster casts than human beings, and it took a long time before I could extract the meaning of it all.

It transpired that a young man had died recently, and the widow and close relations had gone into deep mourning by plastering themselves with pipe clay.

The origin of the custom is obscure, for I could only cajole from the old men that "our fathers did it; their fathers did it so we do it." It is New Guinea fashion. Death casts a gloom over the whole community for months, for the spirit of the dead still hovers about the village, ever waiting an opportunity to work harm and evil. The widow after death at once goes into the deep mourning I have just described. She retires to her house, giving endless expression to her grief—which appears to be more a superficial formality rather than heartfelt emotion. For a period of from two to three months she remains confined within her house, living on nothing but the scantiest of food and attired only in pipe clay. Her friends bring her food and small gray seeds called "Job's tears." These she weaves into a waistcoat-like bodice, and at the expiration of her imprisonment a great feast is given and she is permitted to leave the house. For at least another year she must wear her garb of tears and cover her shaven head and face with pipe clay to show, at least outwardly, that she is sorry and her spirit is sickened with remorse!

After a lapse of a year the whim of the nearest male relative decides she has done sufficient penance, and expiated herself. Another feast is given—in fact, feasts play an impor-

WARAGI THE PHILOSOPHIC

tant part in all Papuan customs—and the brother of the deceased removes the garb of sorrow, and places it around a pig! The sadness has left the woman with the garb and gone into the pig! The latter is killed and eaten, thus changing sadness to gladness. The old garment is thrown away and the woman is a normal being again, and on the marriage market. No woman ever desires to remain a widow in New Guinea.

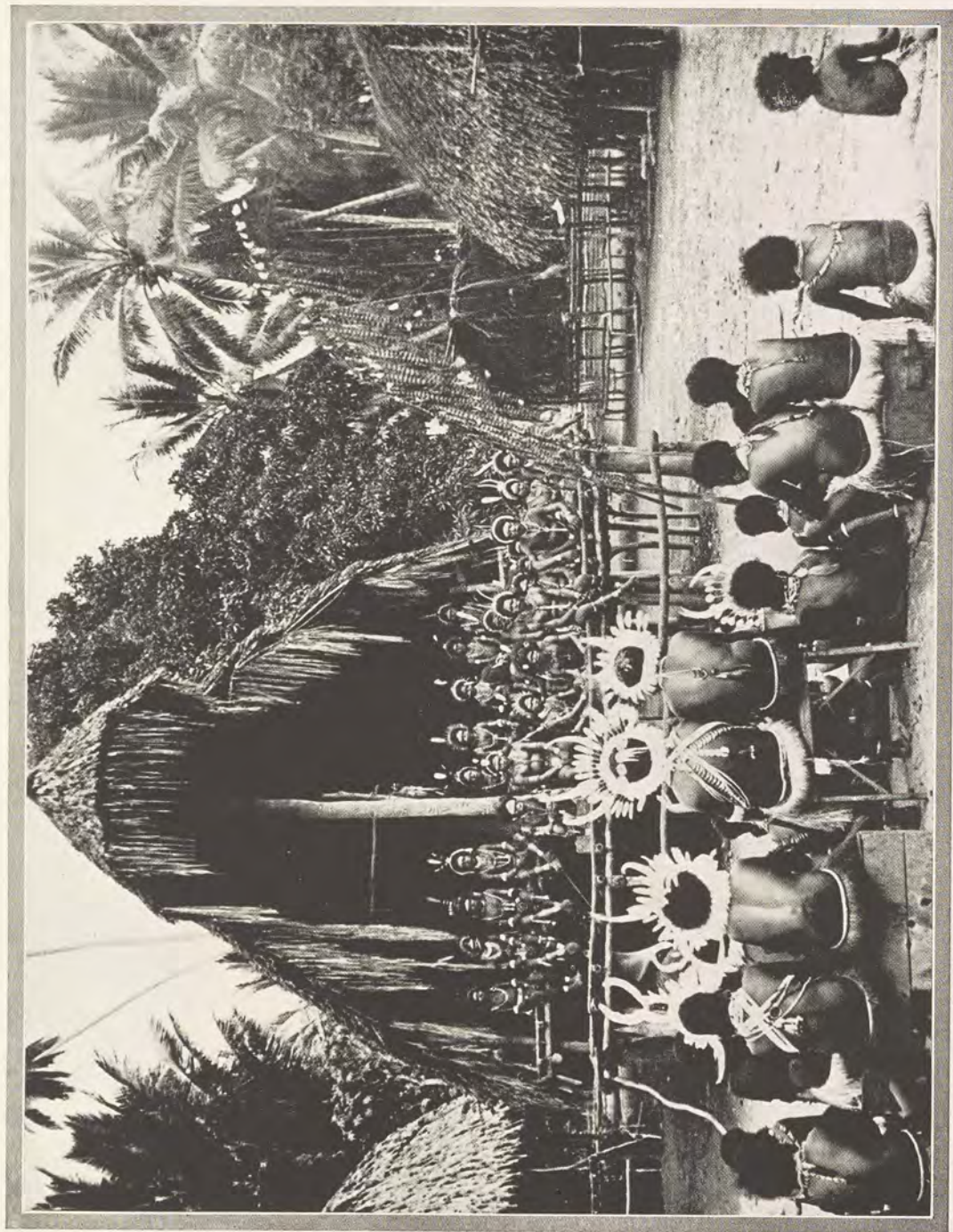
I returned and went aboard the lugger, and being anxious to make Wanigella, a large Orokaivan village by next morning, determined to sail on through the night. This evoked intense consternation in the heart of my native coxswain, whose knowledge of the compass extended to the familiar daylight contours of well known headlands. In the dark he was completely lost at sea, as the vessel swerved round imaginary corners, many times in several minutes, manœuvred through a maze of imaginary reefs in as many more, I set a course on a bright star directly over our path and hoping that the heavens might not circle in the interim, went below.

In scarce fifteen minutes the coxswain shouted: "Taubada you bin gib me 'nother star, I bin catchem that feller!" Knowing too well the leisurely gait of our old tub, I came to the conclusion that the *Eureka* could not have caught the star in so short a period and went up on deck. To my amusement Alpha Crucis had indeed disappeared—behind a cloud! So I took the helm and early next morning brought the vessel to anchor by the strange home of the Orokaivas.

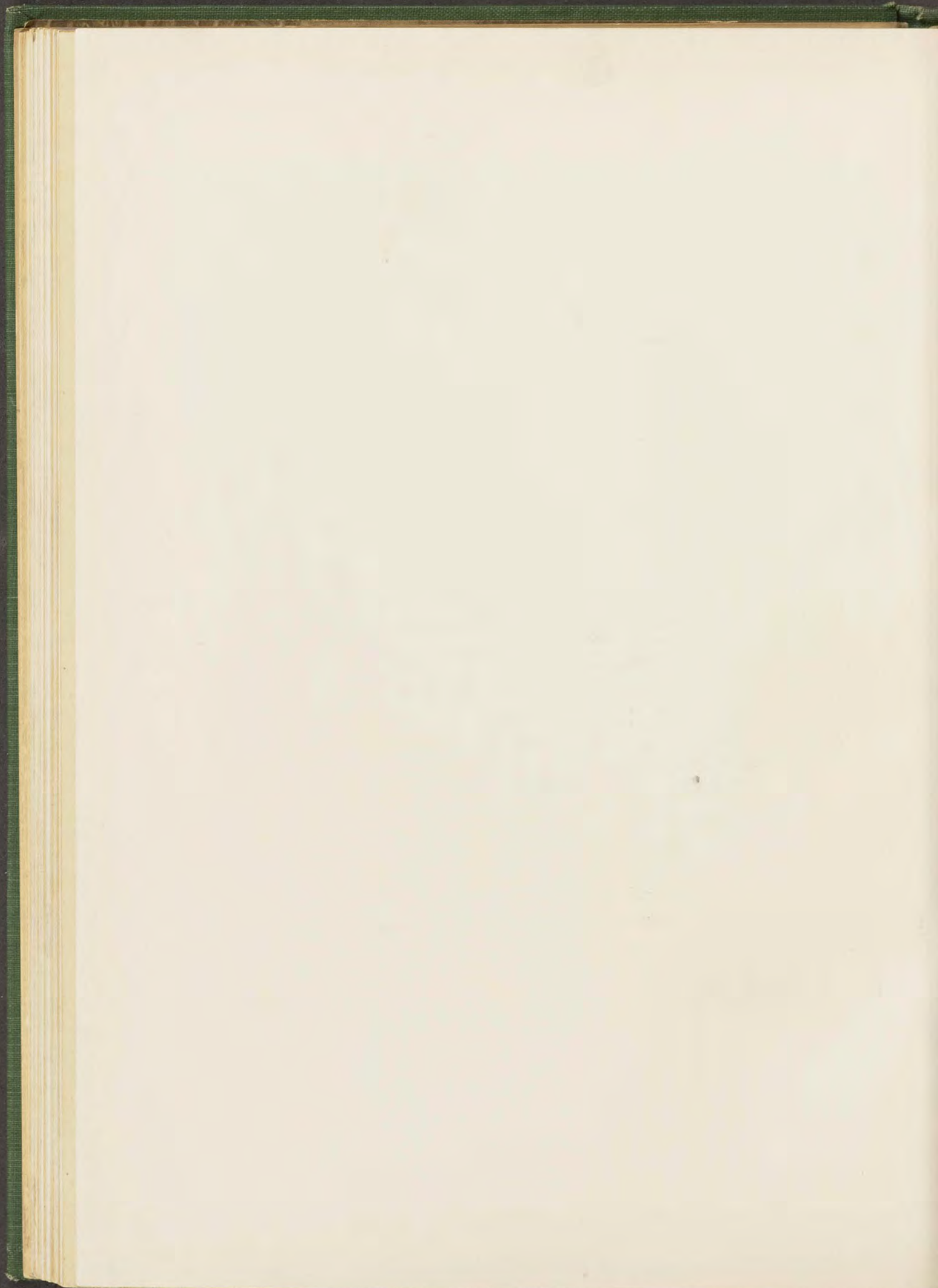
4

The name Orokaiva is loosely applied to those natives inhabiting the north coastal region of Papua, from the Membare River to Mukawa, Cape Vogel; the word originating from their greeting, "Orokaiva!" The Orokaivas still live largely in their primitive condition, civilization having done little beyond

Singing festivals play a large part in the existence of the natives at Mekeo and neighbouring villages. The contests are arranged by challenge. One village challenges its neighbour by planting a staff in the middle of the highway. The staff is not removed until the singing festival is ended. A great feast is prepared and the contending villagers assemble in their gawdiest attire, and the picked singing teams take up positions on opposite sides of the high road. Both begin singing at once, each team arranging its chants in relays, half of the chorus remaining silent while the other half sings. By this method each team is able to secure rest and refreshment, which are important considering the fact that the singing continues for hours and sometimes days at a time. As the chant covers only a range of three or four notes, repeated over and over again, the effect becomes monotonous and maddening after a time. It appears, however, to have no effect on the singers who become hypnotized by the sound of their own voices.



A NATIVE EISTEDFODD AT MEKEO



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eliminating the habitual tribal bickerings, open warfare, and developing more strongly the faculty of craftiness. The number of tribes, tongues and dialects appears to equal the multiplicity of the villages. The large village of Wanigella confounded me especially, for there three sub-villages merge into one, three different tribes dwell, and three different languages are spoken!

The native version accounting for this babel is at least original if not convincing. Two young people of the Ubir tribe fell desperately in love with one another, but as they had been otherwise bethrothed from childhood their cruel parents forbade the intimacy. As young people do under such circumstances, they eloped. This flagrant breach of tribal ordinances and parental authority summoned the young bloods to spears, and off they set in pursuit. The luckless lovers, hearing the hunters drawing near, climbed a tree. Up, up they went, the pursuers close on their heels. The tree, however, was sympathetic, and protected the lovers by growing as fast as their enemies could ascend! The wise old parents, observing the dilemma, took council, and decided it were better to cut down the tree. The tree fell with a mighty crash, and it was discovered that in the fall the tongues had received such a shaking that each pursuer spoke a different language!

The customs, beliefs and ceremonies of the Papuans seem so strange as to be grotesque. They are encumbered and obsessed by the fetters of tradition, and evince an extreme reticence towards the alteration of tribal status or custom which tradition decrees.

Hard by Wanigella is a charming little creek. Its waters drain the hinterland swamps, and its banks are overgrown with mangrove thickets. These latter rise like a forest of stately columns from either bank, and spread their branches in a high over-arch, shading the creek with a leafy canopy.

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The sunlight filters through in pleasant green gloom and it is all so quiet and hushed that the waters are transformed into a glazed picture of perfect peace and rest. By a small clearing a group of women were weeping. The object of their distress was a young woman with very red hair, seated in their midst.

What did it all mean? The gala attire spoke not of death, for the young woman was overspread with ornaments and gaiety. They were this girl's friends, sad—traditionally sad if I might adopt the adjective—for she was a bride and it was part of the ceremony to weep and feel sad. Alas! sadness is more the lot of the Orokaivan woman than gladness.

The rufescence of the young woman's hair and of the upper body was brought about in a singular way. The pod of a certain bush vine is collected, the interior is removed, and when pulped produces a thick ruddy paste. This is mixed with coconut oil, and the relatives, taking mouthfuls of the soupy mixture, spray the unfortunate victim with this doubtful salve of blessings. My advent disturbed the proceedings, and the group moved off in a funereal manner towards the village, where great excitement prevailed. The women gathered together in gossiping groups about the weeping bride, the men around the bridegroom's house.

5

Presently there was a stir and a figure fierce in warpaint and feathers dashed out, brandishing his spear. He ranted of the prowess of the bridegroom, of his valour in combat, of his dexterity and skill with the spear, and eulogized him as a warrior and mighty hunter. The weeping one seemed pleased, and slowly moved forward. Then out came another, and prated of the Tapa cloth she should wear, omitting to say she would have to make it; of the *kaikai* she would eat, not mentioning that she would have to prepare it; and of the gardens she



ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SINGERS OF THE MEKEO FESTIVAL IN FULL DRESS FOR THE OCCASION. THE HEAD-DRESS IS BRILLIANT IN COLOUR, COMPOSED OF BRIGHT FEATHERS AND RICH COLOURED FLOWERS. THE SAME BARBARIC COLOURING IS CARRIED OUT IN THE BEADS AND ORNAMENTS. THE BONE NOSE ADORNMENT IS WORN ONLY ON DRESS OCCASIONS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE



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would have, forgetting to state that she would have to slave in them. Again the bride moved closer to the house. Still another came and raved about the bridegroom's canoes, of his skill as a fisherman and everything appertaining to the sea. This bombast continued, the bride being, as it were, coaxed forward by each promise of gift and the desirability of the man as a partner.

The bride did not appear to be overwhelmed by this braggadocio; she just kept on silently weeping, until the final champion spoke of the pigs she would have. There was no hesitation—she hastened, climbed up the rickety ladder, and went inside. So it is not only in Ireland that the little pig had done it!

Had I not been so keenly engrossed, I would have observed a chuckling old man—the bride's father—hearkening to the promises with straining ear and tying a knot in a piece of string for each. The ceremony terminates with the consummation, but the marriage is not recognized until the husband pays over to his father-in-law all that his champions had promised to the bride. The wily old father cuts off a knot from the string tally as each gift arrives, thus keeping check on what is in some measure the purchase price of his daughter.

The woman's hair is shorn off, her ornaments are removed, and so her domestic troubles begin. Marriage is a process in the life of the Orokaivan woman; it is a natural sequence and necessary to the welfare of her spirit. It brings her more pain than actual happiness, for I am convinced the primitive Papuan is devoid of those deeper emotions which we regard as love.

I do not imply that there is deficiency in connubial obligations; doubtless these are observed more rigidly than we do ourselves; tradition and tribal status impel them—but there again these same two usages, more than natural law dictate that the man shall marry, and he does not appear to discrimi-

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nate betwixt faces and graces, so long as the tribal marriage code is observed.

The six mission boys who travelled with me aboard the lugger from far Ambasi were ever an interesting psychological study. Their past knowledge of the white man found its limitations with their missionary padre and hearsay. Yet it astonished me how they took everything for granted. A few labiodental expressions of approving surprise, then they accepted—it was the fashion belonging to the foreigner.

A small harmonium at Wanigella was but of momentary interest. The "Dimdim" had put a spirit inside to produce the noise; it made a funny noise; it was only a thing to be laughed at. But why did the "Dimdim" make small children that squeaked "Pa!" and "Ma!" when pressed, and when laid down closed their eyes in sleep? What did they feed them on? The child's dolls caused as much comment as the lady missionary, who dwells near by. She was a good soul, beloved by her flock for her concern and attention to their bodily ailments, as well as to their souls. Her clipped grey hair and ample physical proportions drew the boys around her in contemplative circle.

"O Evetu Siakabadæ! O what a big woman!"

The idea of a lady missionary was incongruous; but there she is, dwelling in solitude on the small island of Naniau, and as capable in her ministrations as any of the missionaries evangelizing the coasts.

6

I seemed indeed to have arrived at a fortunate time. I had just been privileged to see a marriage ceremony, and now I was to witness the next best thing—a funeral.

Death, other than in the case of the very aged, the infantile, or by a tangible manifestation such as a spear thrust, is looked



THE AUTHOR AT ONONGHE WITH THE GOOD FATHERS OF THE SACRED HEART MISSION. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, THEY ARE FATHER CORTEBEEK, FATHER DUBUY AND FATHER BACH. THESE MEN ARE OF FRENCH OR BELGIAN ORIGIN, WHO HAVE COME TO SPEND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES AMONG THE PRIMITIVE NEGRITOS OF THE HILL COUNTRY. THE FATHERS ARE CULTIVATED MEN, WELL-VERSED IN THE CLASSICS, IN MUSIC AND IN PAINTING. EACH DWELLS ALONE IN A HILL VILLAGE WHERE FOR MONTHS AT A TIME HE SEES NO OTHER FACES THAN THOSE OF THE SAVAGE HILL-MEN. THE LIFE HISTORY OF EACH IS MORE FASCINATING THAN FICTION



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upon by the savage as the work of a sorcerer or enemy. It plunges a large section of the community into mourning, and overturns the routine of village life.

The death was that of an able-bodied man and the whole village was convulsed with apparent grief—a bedlam of fearful wailings and dismal howls, in which the innumerable mongrels took part. This outburst of lamentation went on for a considerable time, while the corpse was being washed, anointed, painted with tribal markings and wrapped in a shroud of pendanus mats. It was then placed on a bier and carried into the centre of the village by eight men, amid solemn silence. Then a man, evidently the deceased's elder brother, approached and addressed the corpse by name, asking of its spirit, "Are you present with us?"

The body and the whole bier swayed. Then the invocation in which the spirit is supposed to reveal the sorcerer directly responsible for the death was begun. Taking a stick from a small bundle the man again addressed the corpse, calling the names of numerous villages known to be on bad terms with their tribe, and suspected of harbouring the enemy.

A new stick was used for each village, and thrown away as it was eliminated, innocent. At last the bier swayed—the village was located. Then clans were called and finally families, until the death was laid to a man who was known to be a powerful sorcerer and an avowed enemy of the deceased. Of course, the whole inquiry had been pre-arranged, but it made a deep and indelible impression throughout the gullible assemblage who had excited themselves into a morbid hysteria.

Towards evening the miserable cortège moved off to the burial ground. Until the Government exercised its right on hygienic grounds, it would have been beneath the house of the deceased. The next of kin headed the procession, carrying a spear in his right hand to direct the path to the spirit, to the

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burial ground, for the spirit still hovers near. Another followed behind, carrying a little bag of treasures so much valued in life. Amid renewed outbursts of grief, the corpse was lowered into the grave, so that the feet pointed to the hills. Before the body was entirely covered with earth one of the male relatives tapped the chest gently with a small baton and told the departed that he must find his way to the place of departed spirits, where those of his family who had gone before would identify him by his face markings and welcome him. Then the friend with the little bag of treasures announced that every care would be taken of them by the next of kin. Finally a warrior in the garb of war shook his spear fiercely above the grave, and in excited talk warned the spirit of the foes that he would meet by the way, and exhorted the spirit to fight and win his way like a true warrior. Then the grave was filled and a light mortuary placed above it. The widow cast herself on the grave, the others left, but she remained quietly weeping.

7

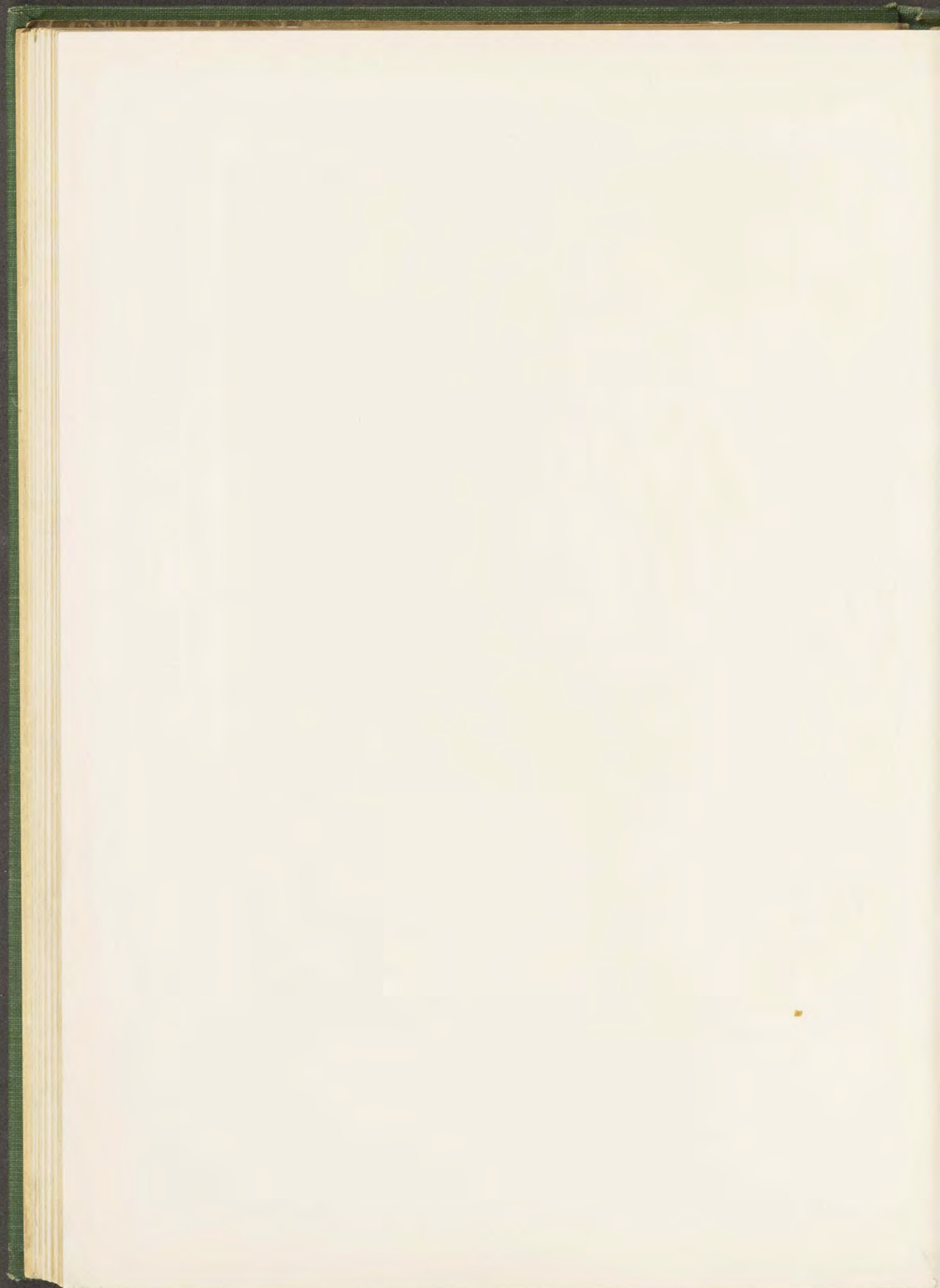
The workings and magic of the "Dimdim Picher Taubada" (white man picture sorcerer) spread rapidly down coast, and wherever we anchored the arrayed natives canoed out, all anxious to be "took."

Never since the foreigner came had there been such an opportunity to display and show off. "Big government" had forbidden feuds and combats, but this Taubada was of a different kind; here was a chance to outshine neighbours, to excel, and win fair hearts. It was a holiday after their desires, and the dimdim (foreigner) gave them kuku (tobacco) for enjoying themselves.

So with red clay rouge and rancid coconut pomade they made sumptuous toilet: painted their cheeks, daubed their lips,



THE RANGES BEYOND ONONGHE, LOOKING TOWARD MOUNT TAFU. ON ONE SIDE OF THESE MOUNTAINS IT RAINS PERPETUALLY AND THE VEGETATION IS TROPICAL AND LUXURIANT. ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE THERE IS LITTLE RAINFALL AND THE FLORA IS WIDELY DIFFERENT IN CHARACTER. THE SUMMITS OF THESE RANGES, WHICH ATTAIN A MAXIMUM ELEVATION OF 13,000 FEET, ARE CONSTANTLY ENSHROUDED IN MISTS



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spent hours in anointing and arranging coiffure, and preened and blackened their eyebrows—teeth were already black—in the zenith of Orokaivan fashions.

Garments! What more beautiful than the exquisite brown skin with which Nature had endowed them, adorned with the plumage of birds and garlands of flowers. The debutantes of Eroro were wrapped in gowns of clinging Tapa bark draped like an apron in front and draped like an apron behind. From out this chic and racy attire blossomed the female form divine; in youth, like rosebuds, blossoming into perfect flowers of womanhood, symmetrical, full, exhaling vitality. Alas! Like full-blown roses, in the summer of their youth, exposed to the tropical suns, they speedily shrivel up, and in middle age become objects lovely no more. Papuan attire might, by the majority, be regarded as ultra-modern; as milliners they certainly are far ahead of our present-day fashions. No dreamer ever conceived such fantastic creations as the Papuans wear to their dances and festivals. The birds which fly the Papuan skies pay the tribute of their lives to mingle their gorgeous plumage in a dazzling ensemble of colour.

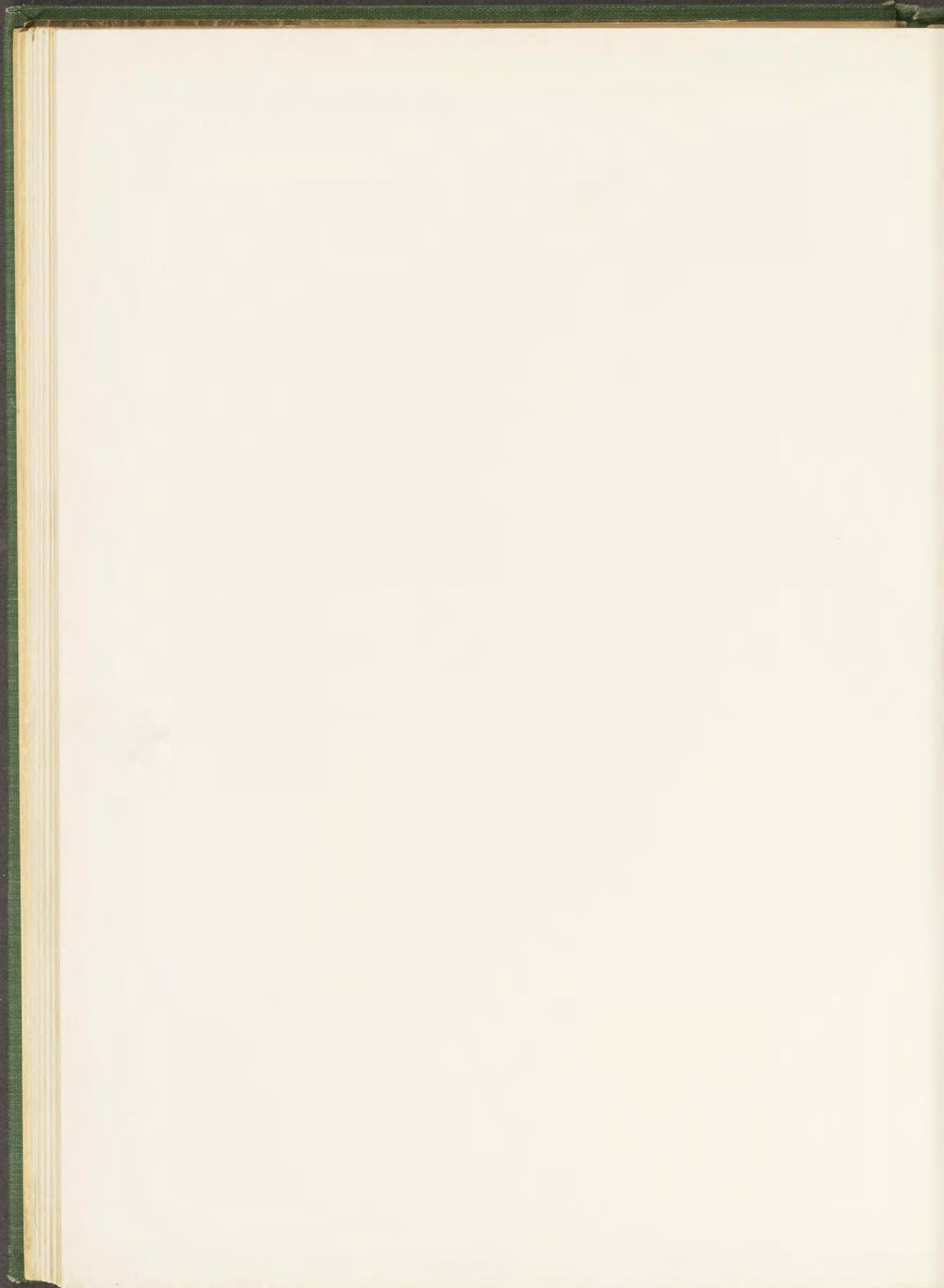
The construction of these magnificent head-dresses takes months, but it is a labour of vanity, pride and love. When finished it will excite the envy and adoration of everybody. How human! Each feather fits into its own socket, the larger ones are split so that they might wave freely, and when the bird of paradise plumes are adjusted, the head-dress springs to life and responds to every sway of the wearer. The intricacy and harmony with which the whole gamut of the spectrum is blended in feathery dazzle, displays an innate æsthetic temperament and subtlety in design; so much so in fact that many of these head adornments appeared as if they had actually sprung from the wearer's head!

Through the frequency of our stoppages and portage on the

A village high in the mountains of the interior. It is in communities like this, veiled most of the year in mists and surrounded by thick jungles of giant ferns, palms and orchids, that the pygmy negrito aborigines live. They were driven inland centuries ago by migrations of Melanesian origin who now inhabit wide stretches of the coastal country. The houses of the aborigines are extremely crude, little more than a nest of sticks and thatch perched on poles.



A MOUNTAIN HAMLET WHERE THE MISTS SELDOM LIFT AND THE RAIN FALLS DAILY.



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backs of painted dudes through the shallows to the shore, ourselves and garments became besmirched with transferred decorations, like the daubings of a futurist sunset in red oxide.

Speaking of dudes, they are even more numerous amongst the Papuan villages than in our cities. I have seen them "shaving" by twisting the week's growth between two fine fibre strings or gripping it between the shells of small molluscs and snapping the hair off at the roots. They spend no end of time on their appearance, and instead of sucking the conventional walking cane, the native Adonis carries a stone club, adorned with feathers, slung over the shoulder, colloquially and significantly named a "skite-stick."

8

The Resident Magistrate of Buna had sent word to the Eroro people of my coming visit, and two hundred natives, adorned with all their war splendour, welcomed us on the beach, clamouring, "Oroda! Oroda!" Six wise interpreters acted as assistant-producers, for my dancers were an unruly assemblage. The stage was a large rectangular flat, enclosed on three sides by stately coconuts and grass huts, and opened on to the beach, where the blue Pacific frayed itself into a foaming margin, dashing over reef and shingle. I marked out the field encompassed by my lens, and laid down boundary saplings. Then after erecting the "shadow-catching engine," I gave the order to my supernumeraries, "On with the dance, let joy be unconfined!"

At once my actors rushed the enclosure, and squatted down on the saplings as if petrified. It took a deal of pidgin English and good Australian rhetoric to make the mob comprehend the idea of the marked space and what they were expected to do within it; and only by my jazzing around the ring and beating a drum, to their unconstrained amusement, did they absorb something of my desires. Once more I tried, but two

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hundred savages rushed the ring and endeavoured to simulate my previous antics.

I have since learned that it is hopeless to stage-manage Papuan customs and dances. Papuan tradition runs in a rut which has only deepened with the years. Pose a Papuan and he will assume the grace and ease of a stiffened automaton. So I just told my "supers" to get along with the dance, New Guinea fashion, while I stood by alert for interesting movements.

Thump-thump! Thump-thump! Thump-thump! A hundred drums rent the air with glad thunder and two hundred wild figures swayed into action. Inspired by their beloved drums, they forgot the camera, themselves, and everything. There was little discipline or conformity in movements. It was a boisterous romp, a wild jazz, a dazzling confusion. Two hundred heads gaily bedecked with fine head-dresses danced their gorgeous plumes like a bewildering kaleidoscope. Their strange song, the roar of the drums, and the stamping of the feet seemed to shake the very earth. Now the drums were thumped at arm-stretch above the head, then bent low to the earth; in and out, swaying and jostling, inebriated with ecstasy and emotion, lurched and hopped the bedlam. It was a wonderful sight, so grotesque and unconstrained—a riot of moving colour that gave one a headache to contemplate for any time.

It was a relief to escape from the din, the dust, the sweat and reek, to the quiet sea. For four hours I had watched the tireless dancers; their energy seemed inexhaustible, and they were dancing as strongly as ever when we hauled up anchor and sailed away from Eroro.

9

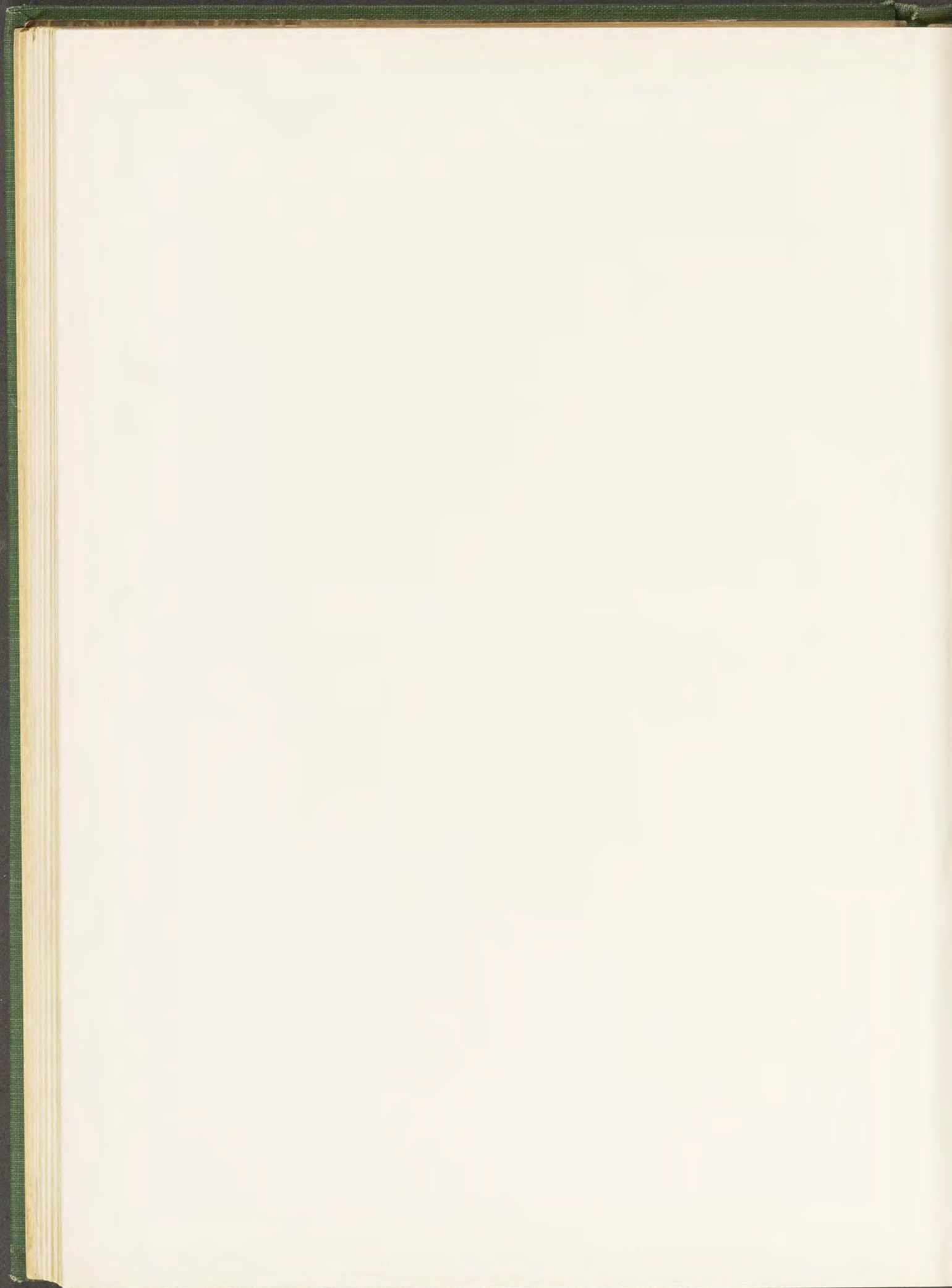
Off the little village of Gauboni we anchored for the night, but we were chagrined to find the people had put on all their



OLD DOGAI OF THE FRIENDLY HILL VILLAGERS, WHOSE COUNTENANCE AND
PET PIG CARRIED THE THOUGHTS TO ANOTHER EMERALD ISLAND
ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE EARTH



TWO LADIES OF EVESI VILLAGE. ALTHOUGH THE AIR IS COLD IN THIS
MOUNTAIN COUNTRY AND THE ATMOSPHERE USUALLY FILLED
WITH MISTS, THE NATIVES WEAR ALMOST NO CLOTHING
AND APPEAR TO BE INSENSIBLE TO CHILLY CLIMATE



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florid embellishments and wanted to be "took." I put them off until the following morning, but the whole crowd followed our wake to the small resthouse, where, to my astonishment, we met another white man, who turned out to be one of those fine old pioneers of New Guinea, a miner.

Time had written in wrinkles and furrows an eloquent chapter across his face, and hardship had bowed the gaunt old form and burdened his back with years. By his side stood a tiny "cookie boy" watching his master like a faithful dog, and ever alert to his bidding. The old man insisted that as he was the first to occupy the resthouse, he should have priority as host, and so welcomed us heartily to his quondam abode. Night falling fast, we decided to celebrate our meeting with a banquet, and diving deep into our "tucker boxes" brought forth tinned refinements gladsome to the heart, but a sad-sum to the pocket.

In this Ritz of our delight, lit by smoking Dietz lamps, we tarried over the courses, for our friend was a man of fascinating interest, a compendium of Papuan history, and an encyclopædia of canning, canned foodstuffs, and labels. He was also a philosopher and a brilliant raconteur. The glamour of the old days out on the Yodda all lived again in the old miner's fire. He lived the fight against marauding cannibals; fever that swept men off like flies. He toiled the rugged ranges and prospected in the gloom of lonesome valleys, with a cocked rifle ever in reach. Then fortune smiled, and with his mate they struck it rich—picked up the golden trash like sand. Then fate smote his mate, and they carried him back over the aching miles raving with fever. He died, as hundreds of our good old pioneers before, so they buried him with a mountain for a tombstone, and but one to mourn his memory.

It was a sad tale the old man revealed, which was rudely interrupted by the tiny "cookie boy" bringing in a tinned

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plum pudding of Melbourne fame. The old man's mouth watered as well as his eyes, and in tremulous voice he addressed his cookie, thus: "Cookie, you savey tucker box, you bin go along fetchem picaninny feller bottle, him stop along. Fetchem tin opener—belong-a-bottle, bringem two feller, close-up we stop!"

To this amazing and amusing order the flask duly arrived, and with pleasant pop and merry gurgle flowed its aromatic contents over the pudding.

Our host, intending to do the thing in style, further ordered, "Cookie, you bin taken this feller puddin' along fire first time, catchem fire stick, makem medicine he stop along puddin' burn all the same big feller kerosene fire. Fetchem quick feller, close up we stop!"

The pudding disappeared, but our host with many strange orders expressive of speed and other terrible incantations, strove to hurry the wayward cookie. Going outside to investigate he uttered a cry of horror. I rushed out to find the pudding going up in a sheet of smoky flame. When the fire had succumbed, through the explosion of pidgin English, I made out that the medicine had refused to burn like kerosene and as the zealous cookie was over-anxious to oblige, he accepted the order literally, and made it burn by pouring on kerosene! After repeated toasting the flask was drained.

Our friend became sentimental and ruminated sadly over the empty tins on the table, and with a sigh informed me that his sole literature for many years had been the labels on milk tins, jam tins, bull-a-ma-cow tins, other tins, and "Bulletins." The old man possessed a remarkable memory for this exalted literature, and could recite verbatim the Words of Wisdom from Arnott's to Zam-Buk. He discoursed volubly on the transgressions of others—the profiteers, who pursued him in every tin to the remotest creation.

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"Here's a tin of O-Milk 14 ozs. The directions tell yer ter take a pound tin ter make a puddin'. Now what do they mean? Here's a tin of—butter they calls it—from Sydney. Look on the lid. Guaranteed under one pound net. Now what the dickens do they mean by that? Jams—14 ozs.—the same. Everything's the same except bull-a-ma-cow, and it seems as if they're glad to get rid of it. Wot's the good of weights and measures. They're bad enough without makin' new ones for tinned grub. They rooks the public with charges, and they prints ther weight of the contents in deludin' microscopic letters, that yer wants a telescope ter read 'em. Day-light robbery—stealing, I calls it—and they prints it on the tin ter rub it in!"

There was no disputing our friend's philosophy; it was the regrettable truth, for every tin showed it to be several ounces short. Truly the public are actually told they are being robbed. Not feeling argumentative, I crept beneath the mosquito net, to be lulled to sleep by the singing mosquitoes and the distant accompaniment of drums down in the village.

10

Next morning, after filming the village dances, we went aboard our lugger and put to sea. A lonely figure surrounded by a crowd of painted natives waved us farewell until we rounded the point for Tufi.

Tufi is the Government station, where rules in state the Resident Magistrate of the North-Eastern Division. Situated on Cape Nelson promontory half-way down the north-east coast to Samarai, Tufi is famed for the magnificence of its harbour. The promontory is altogether a remarkable place, and evidently named by an admirer of the great admiral. The three great peaks, Trafalgar, Victory, and Britannia, appear to have poured great lava fields to the sea, leaving

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numerous chasms, eventually to erode into a network of beautiful inlets and harbours. Altogether there are a dozen of these wonderful waterways, which bear a resemblance to the fiords of Norway. Narrow arms of the sea wind into the mountains between perpendicular bluffs and precipitous slopes, draped with vines like emerald tapestries. Small villages perch aloft on the pinnacles, and wherever a patch of soil occurs gardens are made and coconuts planted.

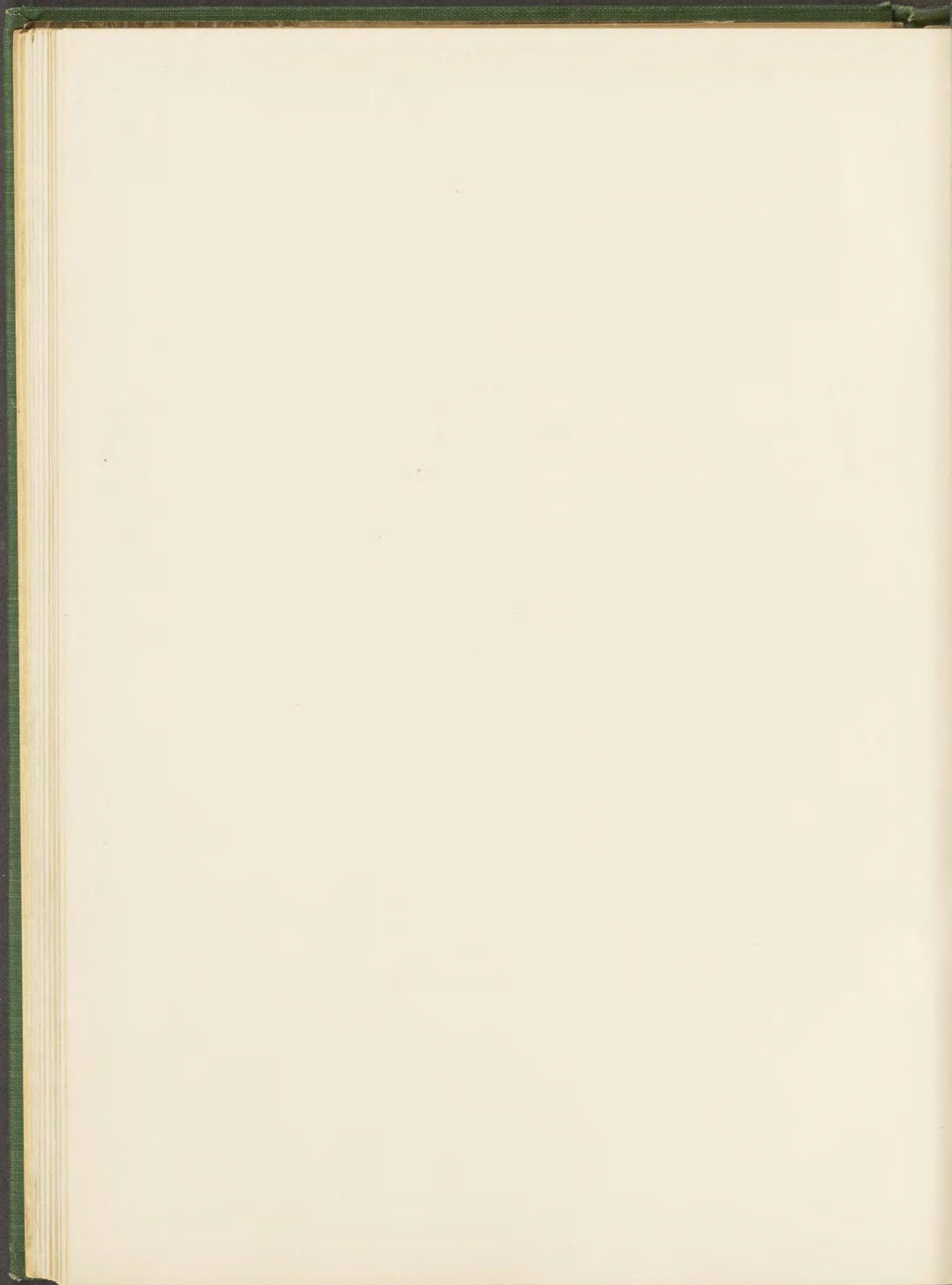
On the southern side of the peninsula are numerous valleys of intense fertility, and superb beauty. In all my worldly travels I have never entered a more delectable place than the Valley of Awanen. Paddling up the enchanted water of a small stream, near the island of Naniau, one glides into fairy-land. Alpine heights, rich clad with nature's velvet and overspread with flowers, rise up on either side. Small villages shaded by palms seem to rest in eternal slumber, lulled to drowsiness by the lullaby of the purling stream. Behind all rise the dream mountains, so ethereal in their delicate haziness that it seems as if the zephyrs must blow them away. But the glory of Awanen is its croton hedges. The walks that lead betwixt the villages are hedgerows of gorgeous variegations, while *dracænas*, *calladiums* and *colei* thrive free and wild, dazzling the eye with their sumptuous foliage.

The folks of Awanen are a happy people. Their faces reflect the smiling nature which surrounds them, and one could not help but contrast their carefree lives with ours, poor strugglers battling in the whirling vortex and grime of our cities. Nature in all her wildness is kinder and more compassionate than our self-inflicted civilizations, and why these children whom nature has so gently nurtured should "sign on" and leave their Garden of Eden to become white men's slaves is an unsolvable mystery—at least to me!

CHAPTER VI

ABORIGINES OF THE INTERIOR

A JOURNEY INTO THE HOME OF THE MOUNTAIN GNOMES .



CHAPTER VI

1

I AM seated with the bearded fathers of the Sacred Heart mission on the upper verandah of their Yule Island Home enjoying the south-east breeze that romps up the coast from Port Moresby seventy miles away. The evening meal is over and there is an ineffable feeling of peace and contentment in the tobacco laden atmosphere that envelops us. We have just been recounting our various experiences in life, and as each took his turn around the circle, deeper still did my admiration grow for these godly men, who not only have distinguished themselves in the service of their God but also in the service of their country. One is a famous French Ace aviator, another a well known Belgian bomber, others have rows of envied War decorations, not one but has a career that the foremost might envy. All are great scholars, several Professors of Languages, Art and Music. In time of need they have valorously responded to their country's call; and afterwards, their God has directed them to carry his word into the lonely heart of New Guinea. You would love these bearded French fathers as much as I. Throughout New Guinea they are universally revered. It matters not your creed or your beliefs, the door is always open at Yule Island. You may come and go, and be ye of their faith or any other, you cannot go away without carrying a happy memory of this

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little band of men that will always hold the highest place in your esteem.

The policy of the mission is industry combined with physical welfare tempered with the simplest form of spiritual enlightenment. The fathers have instructed the natives dwelling within their parish in better methods of agriculture, rice growing and useful handicrafts, and have actually cut a road through hitherto inaccessible mountainous country one hundred and twenty miles inland to their furthest station. On a clear day you can look from the Yule Island Headquarters across the blue waters of Hall Sound to the mainland shores and then over the distant mountain ranges to the far off summit of Mount Tafa. In the valley beyond the Tafa lie the villages of the pigmy negritos of Ononghe, the terminal point at present of mission activities. I discussed with the fathers the possibility of making the journey into the interior and by good fortune found that the veteran priest Father Bach was setting out on a pilgrimage to the hermit fathers of Ononghe in a few days. We decided to combine forces and journey together.

Mr. Humphries, the resident Government magistrate at Kiaruku, kindly assisted and recruited thirty native carriers from the adjacent mainland village of Bioto. Further he loaned me two native village constables to take charge of the carriers and the former were threatened with official penalties if they permitted any of the carriers to escape. This was a wise precaution for carriers have a proclivity for absconding when they find portage a trifle arduous or they are getting too far from home. However, I had little trouble with the carriers, for they were treated humanely and though we took them farther from their home than they had ever been before, the jaunt was like a pleasure outing which they thoroughly enjoyed, frequently voicing their sentiments which my inter-



CAPTAIN HURLEY WITH THE FRIENDLY DOGAI BESIDE ONE OF THE THATCHED HOUSES IN THE MOUNTAIN
VILLAGE OF EVESI



ABORIGINES OF THE INTERIOR

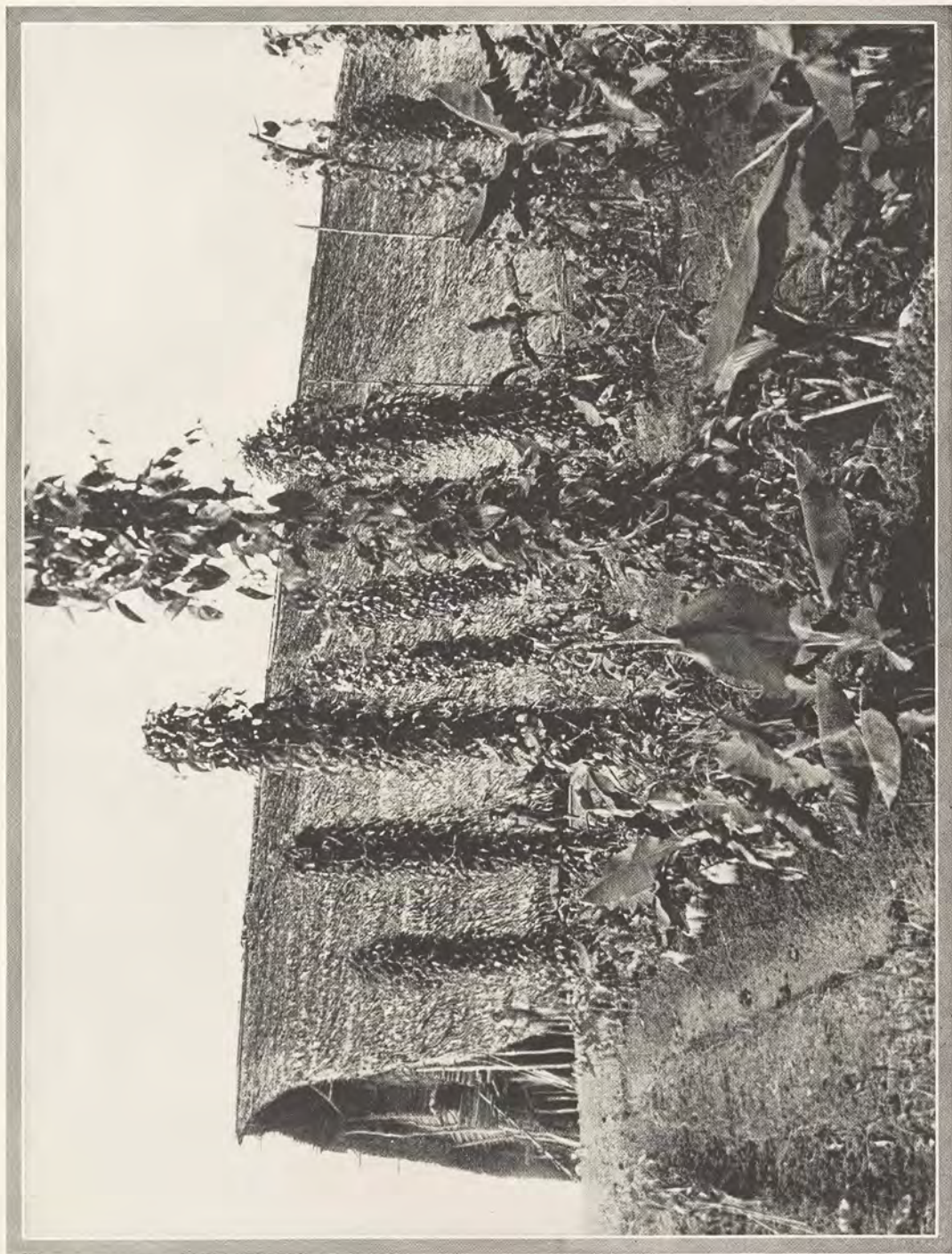
preter Julio translated "These two fella whitemen are of a different kind."

We set out from Yule Island and crossed the water to Bioto where loads were allotted, one hundred pounds' weight being secured to a carrying pole and borne by two men. Everything was enveloped in waterproof covers, for once on the mountain heights, rain sets in after two o'clock each day and continues through the night till the rising sun banishes the clouds. We moved out in a long file from Bioto, the village women following us for some distance and lamenting the departure of their husbands, a ceremony in which they were sympathetically assisted by packs of wailing mongrels. After crossing a sun-scorched coastal swamp infested with malarial mosquitoes, we began the ascent of the coastal ranges, and pursuing a well-graded track, soon plunged into cool tunnels of evergreen gloom which meandered through the dense jungles like great burrows.

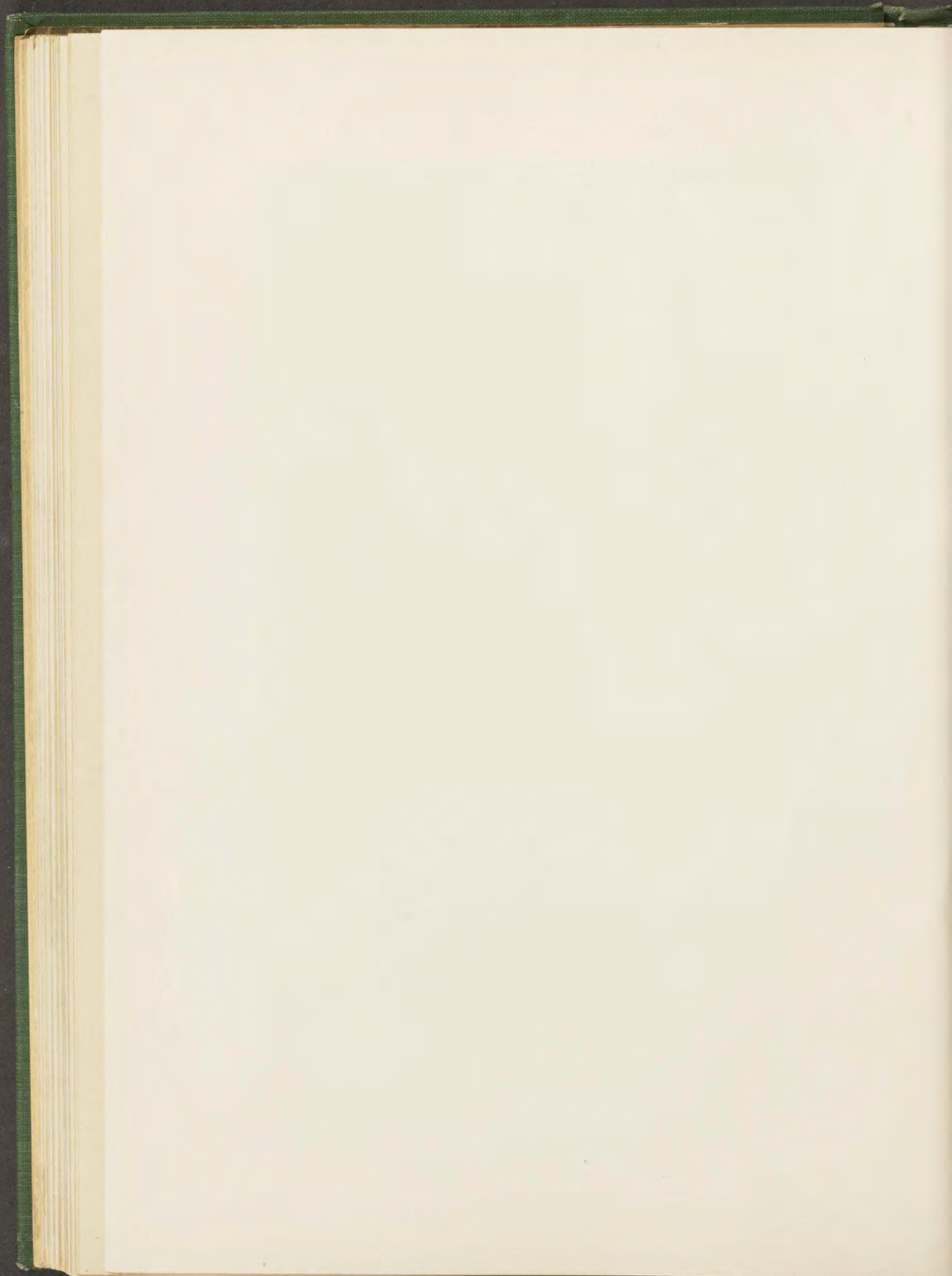
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Day after day the file of brown men with Father Bach and myself at the head climbed the winding track to mountain crests or plunged into deep valleys, where we loitered beside cool mountain torrents that made the gorges noisy with their ceaseless song. At nights we drew into small mission hamlets where the hermit fathers came out to greet us and to extend us a parental welcome to their mountain sanctuaries. For days ahead the mountain people anticipated our coming, calling from their dovecot-like homes from ridge to ridge across the valleys that which Julio translated to "Here comes a missionary and an Englishman." The good shepherds are loved by their mountain flocks and as we had treated the people kindly on our way so were our actions transmitted from peak to peak by "the mountain telegraph." Everywhere the little

Aramia and the surrounding villages are located in a great swampy district inland, at the headwaters of the Aramia affluent of the Bamu River. Above the marshes rise a number of low and fertile hills, separated by stretches of open water dotted with floating islands of grass and reeds. It is on these hills that the villagers have erected houses of beautiful construction. The gardens are unique among Papuan gardens in the attempt at planning and genuine horticulture. Among the yams, taro and tobacco plants are planted gaudy crotons and other ornamental plants of purely æsthetic value. The villagers, although valiant and capable of defending themselves, proved genial and friendly and the most cultivated of all primitive Papuans. Their community is one of extraordinary beauty and is marred only by the presence of mosquitoes which arise from the vast swamps at sundown with the noise of far-off surf.



A HOUSE AND GARDEN IN ARAMIA, ONE OF THE FINEST COMMUNITIES IN ALL NEW GUINEA



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people gathered on the track to bid us welcome hailing us with "Ave Marias!"

At Maifulu Father Fastre who is a musical professor and composer, entertained us with his kindergarten chorus. This was composed of some thirty voices all under the age of fourteen years. They sang Oratorios in Latin with astounding accomplishment while the good father accompanied on a small organ! Their voices were rich and harmonious and a deep relief from the monotonous chants that I heard elsewhere. On the following day just as dawn began to break over the mountains I called the party. They were anxious to be astir, for the night was bitterly cold, and the carriers who were accustomed to the coastal heat, suffered severely. By six thirty Father Bach and I pushed out from the charming little mission station at Mondo leaving the carriers to follow at their leisure under the control of the Corporal. The Mondo station is only opened occasionally by a visiting father, and comprises a neat little cabin with the church near by all made of native grass and materials. I was particularly interested in the fence which has been made from stakes cut from the wild *Dracænas*. All the stakes have taken root and the result is an enclosure surrounded by a thriving fence of robust colourful plants!

In spite of the ruggedness of the great ranges, the track was remarkably well graded—averaging one in ten to one in five. It followed along the brink of gorges and one had to be wary of footsteps on account of the landslips and washaways. Frequently the track wound in a horseshoe so that one almost returned to starting point only on a higher grade. Obviously this part of the track was used infrequently, for it was badly overgrown with ferns, which grow in almost impenetrable profusion, even mounting up the tree trunks. As we kept on climbing, the mists came down, filling our environment with

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gloom. The hoary, bearded trees, the decay and funereal gloom, the complete silence made the place uncanny and dismal. This high altitude which we now walked was entirely unlike any that we had hitherto seen in the strangeness and gloominess of its vegetation. The trunks of stunted trees were outlined from ground to nethermost branch with long hairy moss of sombre green. The finer texture of the ferns, the dull monotonous green and the awful silence. . . . We seemed to be in a funereal world that had grown a forest of moulds and lichens.

Late in the afternoon we neared a clear gap and as there were a couple of tumbled-down bush shelters there, we decided to camp.

Picture the dense misty gloom of the high mountain jungle with the carriers coming in from the path out of the fog, and last of all the sudden, effortless down-pour of rain—sullen cold, desolate. The best of the shelters I have given to the carriers and in another, with a roof leaky and far gone in decay, I have pitched my tent. Our muddy floor is covered with split wood, and while Father Bach reclines on my stretcher, I have made an uncomfortable bed out of the cases we carry.

Our little bivouac is situated at an altitude of about seventy-five hundred feet. It is extremely cold and our camp fires smoulder smokily while the carriers chant a Mekeo song and think, no doubt, what fools white men are. In fact they say as much—forgetting that Father Bach understands their language.

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16th July, 1921.—At last we have arrived at Ononghe, the final stretch being extremely trying, owing to bad rest the previous night and eight hours' quick march. The extreme cold also stiffened our limbs and the rain made the track a

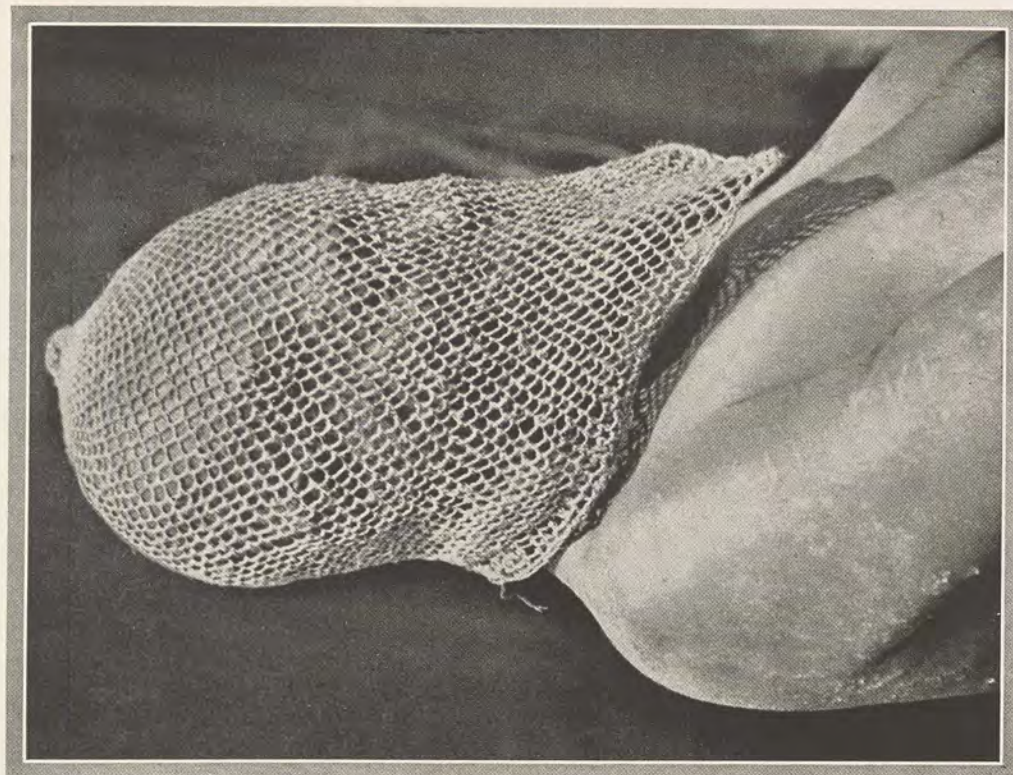
ABORIGINES OF THE INTERIOR

miserable slosh-puddle. Looking back there were occasional glorious glimpses through the moss-covered trees of the Tafa, nine thousand feet and Mount Yule far on the horizon. The track follows around bluff mountains cut on the edge of gorges ever slightly and gradually descending, for Ononghe is at least two thousand feet below the Tafa road which is eight thousand feet above sea level. As one descends into the valley, the trees and foliage become much more luxuriant than that which grows on the black heights of the Tafa. The road, kept clear and free from all vegetation and overgrowth, is more like a path through a beautiful natural garden than a trail in the remote heart of New Guinea. Sometimes on the edge of a gorge, with the foliage three hundred feet below, one can look across splendid vistas of Alpine beauty to the most noble peaks of the Owen Stanley Range, to Mount Victoria's summit over thirteen thousand feet above sea level.

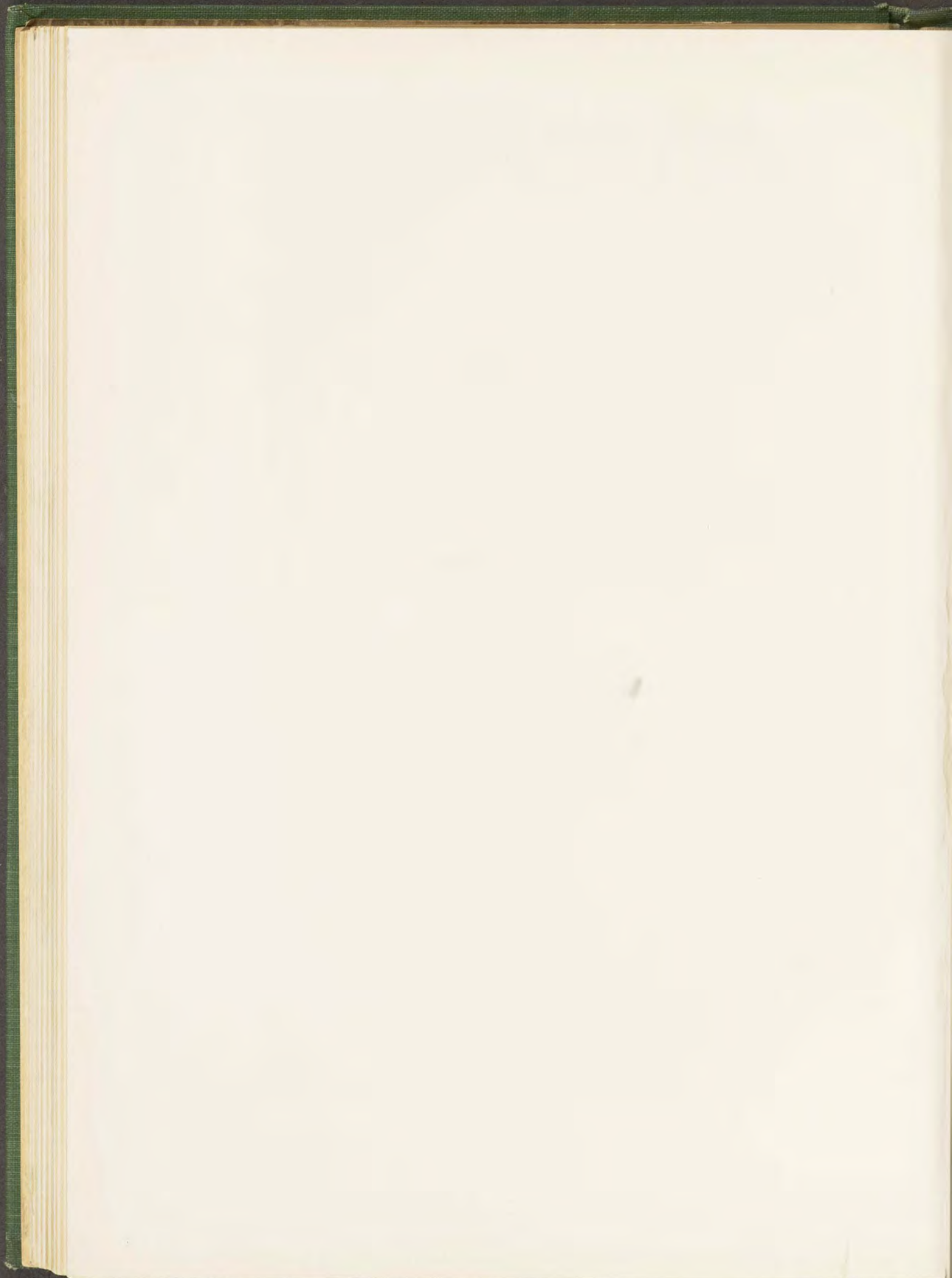
Two hours and a half from the station, the roadway widens into a splendid track, sufficiently wide for a carriage (in fact the latter is actually on its way, in pieces, to Ononghe) and is suited for a motor car. The foliage grows more luxuriant, and splendid trees, luxuriant ferns and palms grow in an impenetrable forest. Suddenly the vegetation breaks clear and there is a glimpse of the Mission Station on a distant spur, standing in the midst of a vast gulley. The unexpected bursting into view of this amazing valley almost devoid of trees, reminds me of the prospect across the Jordan Valley, looking to the hills of Moab; only here the ranges are double the height. As the road continues to descend, there are glimpses of numerous villages on the small ridges, and the people run out to behold the unusual sight of two white men and a number of carriers. The road here is magnificent and has entailed a vast amount of cutting, but as the weather and climate is very dry, the rains and mists precipitating them-

At the time of marriage an Aramia warrior places on his head the bizarre, conical cap shown at the left. It is worn for an indefinite period, sometimes for years. The hair grows into the meshing and it becomes immovable. This Papuan wedding ring however has its disadvantages, for vermin are not unknown among the Aramians and once they secure a foothold inside the cap, it is difficult to dislodge them. For this purpose, each warrior carries a small stick which is thrust through a hole in the top of the cap and is used for stirring up the intruders.

The head-dress worn by the wife represents easily ninety per cent of her entire wardrobe. Why the face should be concealed and the rest of the body left virtually uncovered is one of the great mysteries. This wife was exceedingly shy about being photographed and when she faced the camera bridled and coquetted in comical fashion. Once the process was finished, however, photography became the fashion and the party was overwhelmed by a throng of coy and vain Aramia ladies willing to remove their veils for a trifling present.



A HUSBAND AND WIFE OF ARAMIA



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selves over the costal barriers just crossed, it is not harassed by mountain streams and soakage.

Father Bach arrived twenty minutes before me and Father Dubuy kindly sent a horse out for me to ride in. I was anxious however, though extremely weary, to walk in the rest of the distance, if only to say I had covered all the distance on foot. On reaching the station a bearded father came out to greet me, and a flock of a hundred mission boys to shake hands. It was good to arrive, to sit down and rest and eat after the fatiguing walk of one hundred and twenty miles.

17th July, Sunday, 1921.—I will speak of Sunday mass before describing the station itself. I went to the mass at nine A.M., so as to see—I am afraid, more than worship—the people massed together from villages within a radius of five hours. The original church has been burnt down and the baptised Christians and those not baptised (though with Christian inclination), numbering in all about one hundred and fifty crammed together in the small substitute church like penned sheep. Father Dubuy held the mass, and the opening prayers sounded like a strange sing-song chant, bass and euphonious. The voices massed together produced the strangest human tones I have ever heard. The congregation was just as bizarre. The Christians wear a lava lava—just a cloth wrapped about their loins whilst the other women and men wore something less than a fig leaf. Most of the men were bearded, short, sturdy, thickset fellows, very robust and very dark, averaging five feet in height. In fact many closely resembled our Australian Aborigines.

The densely packed assemblage in the small confined church produced an atmosphere so reeking as to make one feel nauseated. The women with their babes, almost nude, excepting the baptised Christians who wore a loose fitting Mother Hubbard over-garment, generally wide open at the

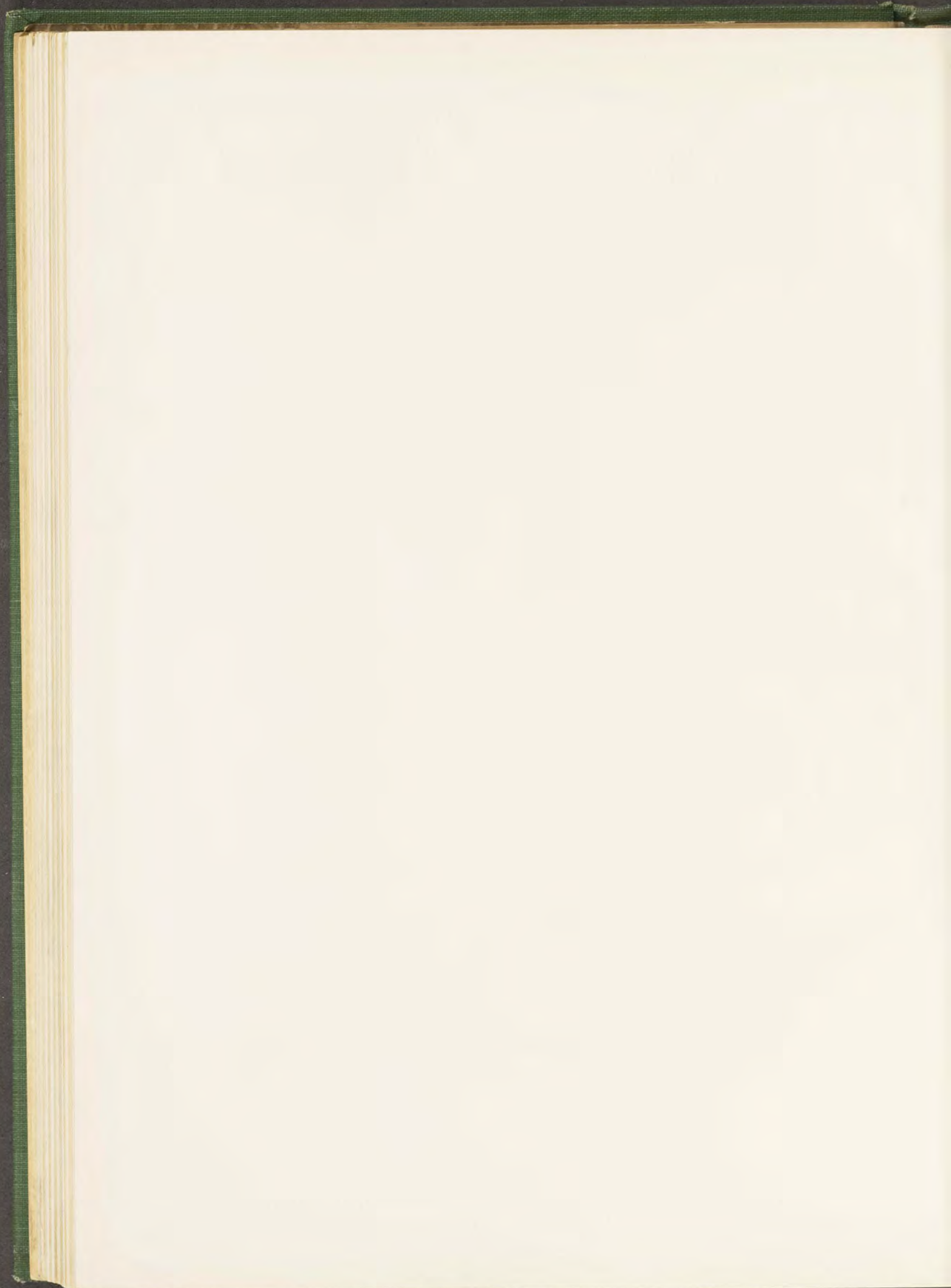
Singing in Papua is largely confined to the men. It was with the greatest difficulty that these warriors could be made to understand what a phonograph was and that it was necessary to stand before it and sing directly into the horn in order to secure the proper results.

All efforts at precision failed until a record was made in the rough and then played for the benefit of the group. Instantly they understood, and from then on the recording was a simple matter. They began at the right moment, sang perfectly in unison, and finished at a given signal. The moment the singing began everybody, even those of the non-singers on the balcony, began to sway with the barbaric rhythm. The music was crude, showing a variation of only a few notes and punctuated by the deep notes of the tom-tom in the foreground. When the record was played for the singers, the wildest excitement prevailed and all the bodies once more began to sway in unison to the sounds from the little black box.

Many of the singers continued to chew their betel nut ravenously throughout the concert. It can be seen in the distended cheeks of both singers and audience.



THE AUTHOR RECORDING A CONCERT AT ARAMIA



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back; the young girls with their hair decorated all over with small cowrie shells, made an ensemble of the wildest Christians I have ever beheld.

First there was a general service at which baptised and unbaptised attended. This took the form of an instructional mass. Then came the mass proper when those except the Christians left the church. Finally came Benediction when all filled the church again. By the time the whole service was finished I was well nigh suffocated with reek, and extremely weary.

Now as to the actual household. Father Dubuy sleeps in a comfortable dwelling, built of timbers from his own water-driven mill—a two-roomed house, his apartment being about eight by ten feet, furnished with a bed and a large collection of books and drugs. In a compartment the other side of the partition, dwell some forty mission boys and countless fleas. Father Dubuy thus keeps in intimate contact with them. The kitchen is similar to the Father's apartment, divided into two compartments, one for dining and the other for cooking.

Owing to the vast amount of work the Father has to attend to, the cooking is done by two cookie boys—useless to a degree—superlatively. I take on the cooking while I am here and we at least get something eatable. Hitherto the Father just opened a tin of meat and with a hunk of bread, washed down with a substitute for tea, made a frugal meal. The two cookie boys are from the near village, both Christians, but extremely primitive and with the native notion of cookery. On going into the kitchen I found floors dirty, shelves dusty, utensils filthy. Beneath the table lay a conglomeration of dirty dishes and saucepans, under the stove unwashed cooking utensils. On the table and in the cupboards remnants of food, soured milk in every jug and so on. The unusual

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culinary activities and spring cleaning so upset the native cooks that they just looked on bewildered, while crowds of natives looked in at the open door to see the dust fly and the fleas hop, these being exceptionally prolific here. Anything beyond cooking yams and sweet potatoes in the ashes is quite foreign to the local cooks; they have no idea naturally of the white man's cuisine and are dismal failures. The house for cleanliness is on a par with their native huts. Owing to difficulties of transport the comestibles are very frugal; nothing in the way of delicacies of any description: but good vegetables there are in plenty and this makes up for a vast lot. The method of purchase and exchange is rather amusing. For a small sack of potatoes weighing up to fifteen pounds, a dessert spoonful of salt is the price. Four matches purchase a large yam weighing up to seven pounds. For three weeks work, or for carrying a load from Ononghe to Fo-Fo Fo-Fo, aggregating one hundred and fifty miles, an axe. Bits of print are eagerly sought after and command a big price.

The remainder of the Station is built on a carved out flat, looking up and down the Vanapa Valley with the Wharton mountains on the far side and just peeping above, the higher summits of the Owen Stanleys. The prospect from the station is a glorious one, vast and extensive and some of the finest Alpine scenery I have ever seen.

18 July, Monday, 1921.—Being extremely pressed for time and being kept busy from sunrise till late night, I have not even time to transcribe my diary fully. I therefore make a series of headings, intending to rewrite these interesting dates at a future leisure time. To the Vanapa headwaters—native track like descending two thousand foot ladder,—Gardens of yams, potatoes, etc., near river—Bridge of fallen tree over rapids—Rock strewn cataract with banks covered with pine

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trees flowing through abysmal gorge—Spent morning investigating and photographing river—Return up track to station. Difficulty with carriers—also with their food. Local natives say that when they went to the coast they were refused food by the Bioto natives (my carriers are from that place) and now they cannot expect hospitality. Father Dubuy visits village and says that my carriers will run away if they are not given food and the carrying will fall on the local natives. Many of these die of fever when visiting the coast with caravans for Mission. This has effect of bringing people to their senses and food comes in in plenty. Though the Bioto carriers eat like, and have the capacity of, pigs.

(Completion of details. Written 23rd July whilst spending day at Farni.)

With four of my carriers and two guides from the local village I set out to the Vanapa River some twenty-five hundred feet below the mission station. The prospect from the Mission facing north, looks up the great valley between the coastal range and the Wharton Mounts to east. The valley slopes down on either side from nine to ten thousand feet ranges in a vast series of parallel ridges running East and West. The gullies between these ridges all drain their waters into the Vanapa River which flows along the V at the bottom of the valley.

The slopes are for the most part grassy and devoid of trees, which in times gone by were cut down to make native gardens. The gardens at present are on the steep slopes near the river, miserable plantations of yams, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and sugar cane. The people are exclusively vegetarian, excepting at dance times when there is invariably the orgy of the sacred pig. The river headwaters flow in great volumes over huge water-worn rocks, a stream impossible to

The party arrived at the village of Kerewa, Goaribari Island, just as one of the great feasts had come to an end. The shore was bordered with rows of skulls stuck on poles and ornamented with ruffs of palm leaves which stirred with a weird motion in the breeze. The gentleman in the photograph was apparently the Mayor of the community and is here shown in the act of bestowing the freedom of Goaribari upon the visitors. The leggings which he wears are characteristic of the Goaribaris.

The community had invited neighbouring villages to the feast and the village was filled with guests all attired in their holiday dress and smeared with coconut oil. The village street resembled more nearly than anything else the Midway of Coney Island at Carnival time, filled with merrymakers in bizarre costumes parading to the music of tom-toms and chants. The palm-fringed skulls are brought out only on such occasions to display to visiting guests the prowess and power of the tribe, much as a European nation parades its war fleets and armies before the eyes of visiting diplomats.



THE COMMITTEE OF WELCOME TO VISITING FOREIGNERS AT GOARIBARI



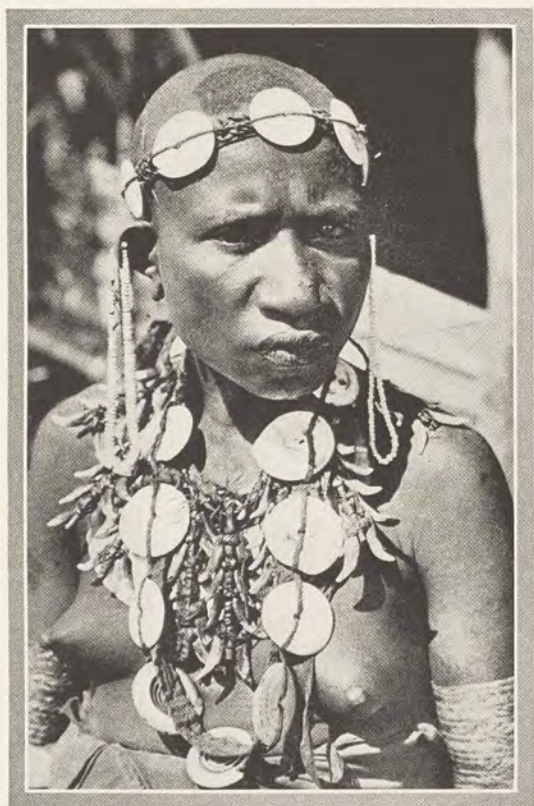
ABORIGINES OF THE INTERIOR

ford on account of its depth and swiftness, except by crossing on the native bridges, just trees cut down on the banks, so that they fall to the opposite side. These "bridges" are continually being swept away, as rains upon the mountains may raise the river ten feet in a few hours. As soon as the stream subsides other trees are cut down to span the gorge. High up on the ridges small pandanus-thatched villages perch like dove cots.

Although food grows in great plenty I am experiencing much difficulty in procuring enough for the carriers and had it not been for the assistance of Father Dubuy, they would have gone with pinched stomachs. I have written on a previous leaf the cause of food scarcity. This evening eight men came in laden with sacks of potatoes and for a time the food shortage has been mitigated. Carriers are ever a worry and nuisance and I shall be glad when I see the last of them.

19 July, Tuesday, 1921.—With Fathers Bach and Dubuy to a new road being made by Father Cortebeek to the village of Ginal. Visited sawmill at four miles distant from Ononghe driven by waterwheel. This provides all the timber for Mission buildings and heavy bridge timbers. About one hundred men of Vesi are working under Father Cortebeek—the first time these people have worked for white men. The grade of the Ononghe extension road is approximately five per cent—a remarkably low grade for this mountainous country. Father Dubuy has a mania for building houses and roads, both exemplary traits. The saw mill of which I have spoken above develops ten horse power by a home-made wheel five feet in diameter. The water is led by a duct from a nearby waterfall and can be controlled by a system of sluice gates. The timbers are cut on the neighbouring mountains and trundled down their slopes, which are very

The Goaribaris are known throughout New Guinea as the best dressed of all tribes. They expend a vast amount of time and energy in making ornaments and adorning themselves. The shells worn about the neck and the head of the lady represent a king's ransom in Goaribari. Since like morals and tastes, jewels are largely a matter of locality, these four types represent four of the largest fortunes in Goaribari. The crescent-shaped ornament worn about the necks of two of the men are made of Mother o' Pearl shell and are the most costly of all ornaments. Some of the tribes living farther to the east on the New Guinea coast make a speciality of shell ornaments. These are traded along the coast and find a ready market at Goaribari.



THREE WELL-DRESSED GENTLEMEN AND A HANDSOMELY GOWNED LADY FROM THE TOWN OF GOARIBARI



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precipitous. Pine is generally selected. The timbers are sawn for the local churches and buildings and also bridge work where necessary for the roads. It is interesting to note that when a new church or station is being erected, a mill is moved to the most suitable site, the timbers are cut on the spot, for the whole jungle of magnificent Debora and Elimo woods are at the disposal of the pioneers. Carrying is thus reduced to a minimum and transport is the problem of the land. The Anglican Missions on the north-east coast are content with bush houses that last a few years—the work of the Fathers lasts scores, a lifetime.

Interesting is the road work. The roads wind around the valleys—splendid engineering work and wide enough for a small carriage. Father Dubuy says, "One day I will be an old man and will not be able to climb up and down the impossible native tracks: I will want to drive from village to village."

The difficulties are intense, for cutting roads with crude people who have never used a shovel is a labour of patience—infinite patience. At the expiration of their time, when the road is finished, they are given their axes. This is sound payment, for useful tools instead of useless tobacco that goes up in smoke, are disseminated through the country and so further assist the people in felling trees and cultivating their lands.

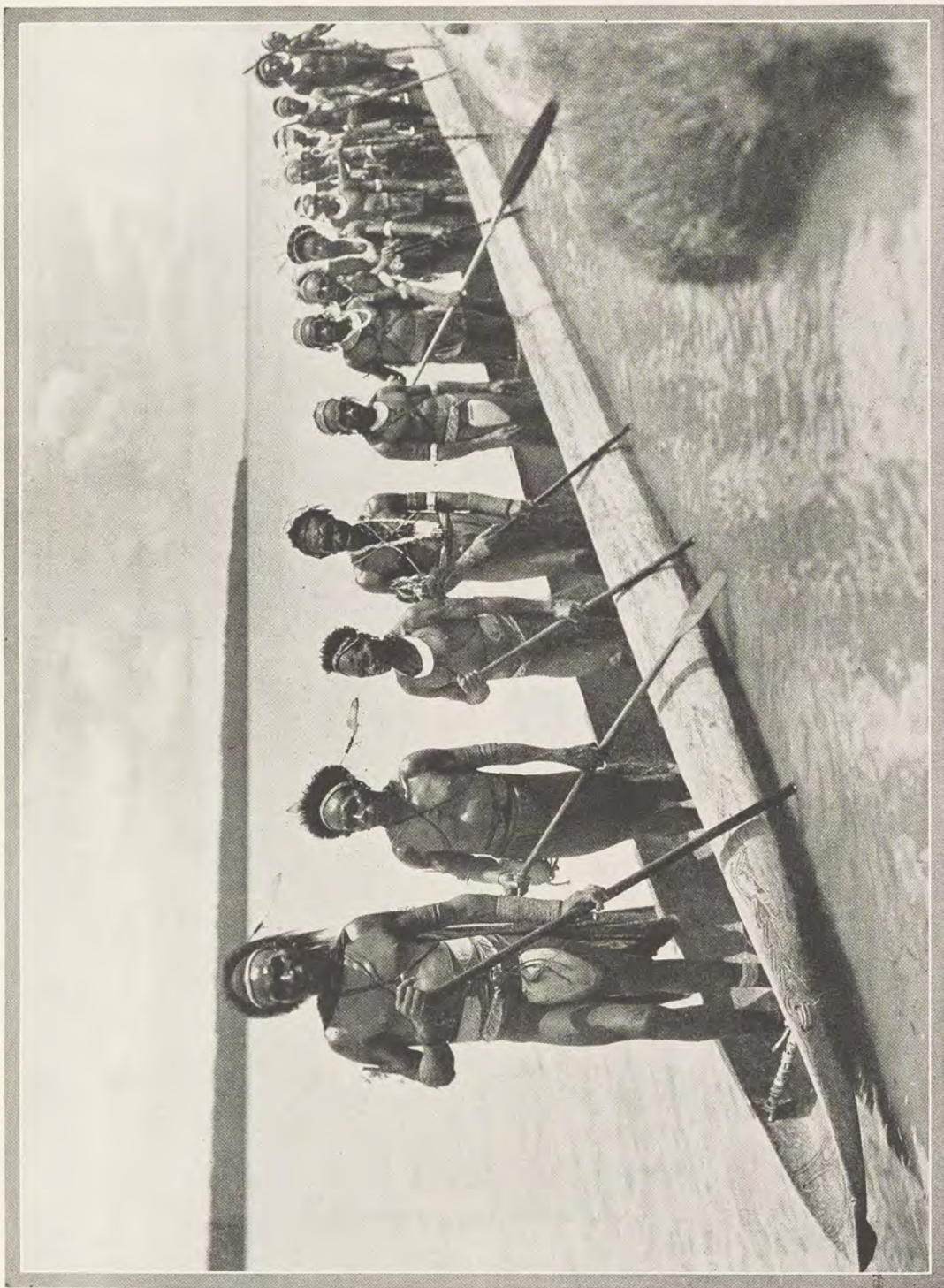
20th July, Wednesday, 1921.—Up early and made phonograph horn from a couple of kerosene tins, for I intend taking several records of the music of these mountain people this evening. Later with Father Dubuy to the village of Evesi and took films and plates. The houses are small pyramidal wedge-shaped cots thatched with pandanus palm leaves and built three to four feet above the ground on piles. They are situated on the crest of knolls which rise from the in-

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numerable low scarps which undulate down to the Vanapa River. The houses which are detached are built around the perimeter of a small cleared area. They are not protected, in their exposed situations, which points to a very moderate climate. We were welcomed effusively by a little old chief and I at once observed that a close intimacy existed between him and Father Dubuy. The little man possessed a striking cast of Irish features with eyes that sparkled with wit and intelligence. In his arms he fondled a tiny pig which he kept patting, the while alternating a conversation between it and the Father which sounded like a jabber of croaks, barks and squawks, punctuated by squeals and grunts from the contented pig. Father Dubuy who uttered the tribal accents eloquently, explained who I was and my purpose for visiting Ononghe. The little man was much bewildered and intimated that he could not understand why I had travelled all the way from the far off land of the white men merely to take back the shadows of his people and the sound of their songs.

Most of the people were away from the village making their gardens down by the river or on distant hill slopes. After a garden is made and the fruits of the soil reaped, the people burn off another site and allow the previous one to lay fallow. Perhaps ten years might elapse before the old garden site is dug again. This accounts for the extensive cleared and grassy areas noticeable throughout the valley. The old men were duly posed and photographed, together with their houses and whatever presented, though their arts and crafts are nil and they do little beyond making nets for catching wild pigs. It is remarkable how free from disease these people are. One does not see the dread sipuma nor the other ulcerous diseases of the coastal people.

We followed a native track down the mountain side through a forest of Giant Pandanus Palms. These I learn only



A GOARIBARI CANOE WITH ITS COMPLEMENT OF WARRIORS. THE SIGHT OF ONE OF THESE FRAGILE CRAFTS MOVING AT FULL SPEED IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS IMAGINABLE. THEY ARE EXCEEDINGLY LIGHT AND TRICKY AND ONLY THE SUPERB SKILL OF THE PADDLERS KEEPS THEM FROM OVERTURNING. THE CANOES ARE PADDED FROM A STANDING POSITION, HALF THE CREW WORKING ON ONE SIDE AND HALF ON THE OTHER. THEY EASILY SURPASSED THE MOTOR-DRIVEN *Eureka* IN SPEED



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grow between the levels of five and seven thousand feet. They are planted by the natives and take the place of coconuts. The tree bears in from ten to twelve years. The fruit is about a foot high, oval in shape and composed of innumerable small woody sections. These when broken up display a small longish kernel which is eaten. Prior to breaking the fruit up, however, it is hung up in the house to be smoked and matured, a process which takes about a year.

Afternoon, made preparations for taking a number of phonographic records of the local songs. The phonograph has travelled with me all around the coast from Daru to the Membare, up the Delta of the Papuan Gulf to Kikori, and now two carriers have brought it from the coast, one hundred and twenty miles into the interior to Ononghe. On opening the machine it started without a hitch and the hermetically sealed tin of records was perfectly intact and without breakages. Father Dubuy entered into the work enthusiastically. The machine with my homemade funnel I placed in the doorway leading between the kitchen and the dining-room. The chorus of singers from the local villages stood around the horn in the kitchen.

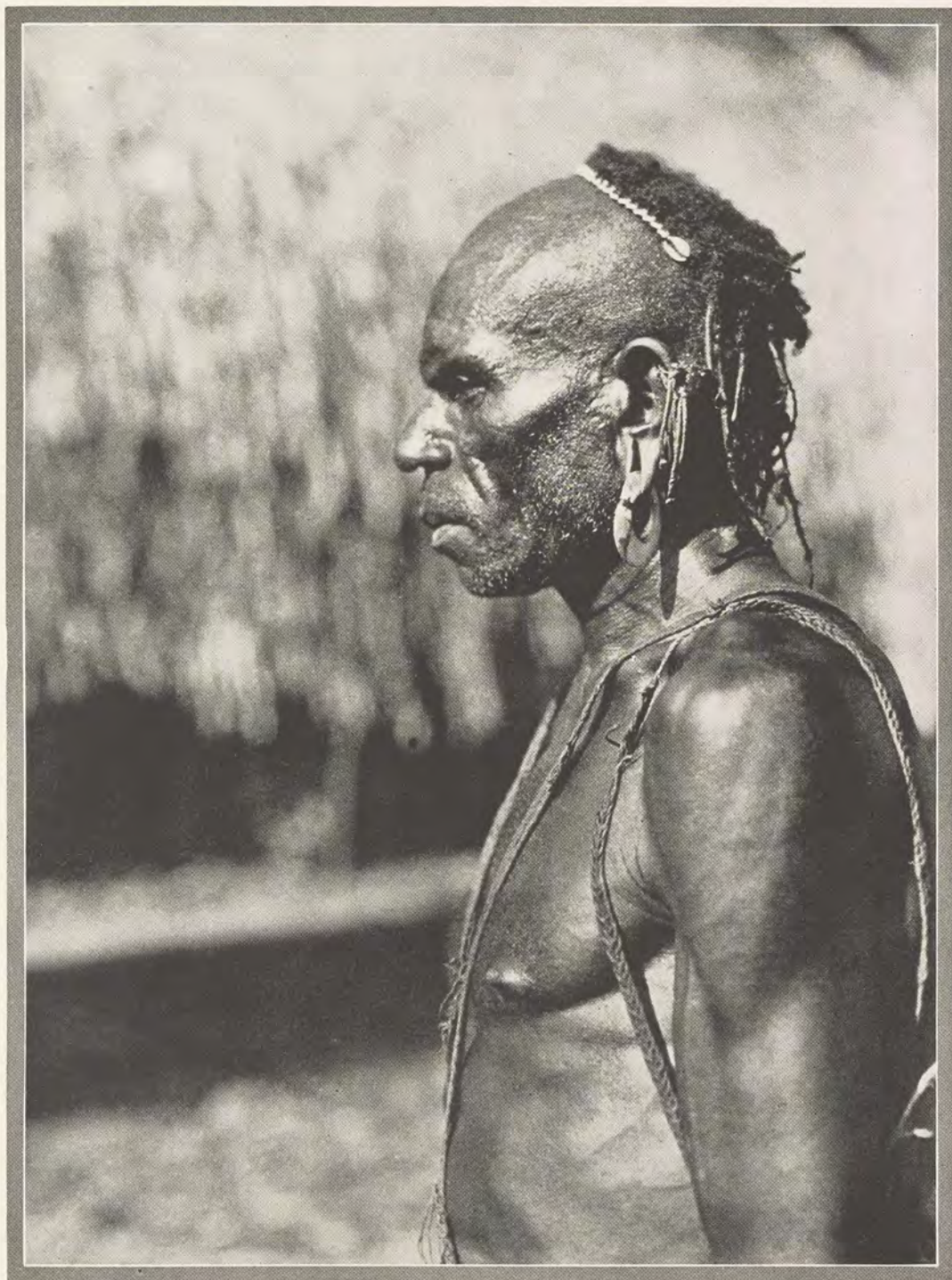
It took a great amount of patience and experimenting before I hit on the correct arrangements of voices and positions. There was the difficulty in getting all to start together and a bigger one in getting them to stop. With rehearsal I could have produced splendid records. The voices were full, bass and rich. Yet after all I secured records just as they sing in the villages. Half a dozen records were made and reproduced so as to give the natives the idea. Then by signal we managed to get them all to start together and to stop together. The reproduction amazed the singers, but they soon got over their astonishment and regarded my machine as another of the works of the white man who can do everything and to whom

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nothing is impossible. The songs have a strange melody, slow in time and every note seems to run into the other, producing a harmonious cadence. The words are simple, never more than a dozen to a song and repeated indefinitely. The same melody might have a score of different words. Those I recorded were chiefly about the rivers, the birds, flowers and things with which they come daily in contact.

21st July, Thursday.—The day of departure has arrived. The carriers were early astir, all anxious to get home—the first time I have ever seen them anxious to push on. Father Bach went ahead while I spent some time taking more voice records; the choir having improved greatly since last night's rehearsal. It was near mid-day when I left the station, all the mission boys following in a grand finale of farewell. Each boy came forward, shook hands, and murmured "Ave Maria." In the Torres Straits Islands we were greeted and sent on our way to the tune of the evangelist hymn, "Happy in the Love of Jesus." Here in the mountains, where the Sacred Heart fathers teach the natives, the greeting is "Ave Maria"—a custom carried from the far fastnesses of Piedmontese Italy, into the mountainous heart of New Guinea on the other side of the world.

Father Dubuy saw me to the gate and we parted. I was sorry indeed to leave Ononghe. The Father is one of the finest men I have ever met and he has helped me in every possible manner, photographically and hospitably. Some day I hope to see again this rare man, whose fine nature has made the Vanapa Valley a place of felicity. A man of great energy, and his work, which leaves him never a second, prospers well. The splendid system of roads and buildings are superb demonstrations of his practicability, and the crowd that attends the church is proof of his success spiritually. My



GORMIER, THE MINISTER OF WAR AT URAMA AND CHIEF OF THE DUBU DAIMA. HE WAS A FINE GENTLEMAN WITH A SENSE OF HONOUR AND A DEEP-ROOTED NATURAL COURTESY. IT WAS GORMIER WHO MADE PLEASANT AND PROFITABLE THE VISIT OF THE PARTY TO URAMA. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, URAMA RETAINS MUCH OF ITS PRISTINE CHARACTER. THE COMMUNITY WILL HAVE NO DEALINGS WITH MISSIONARIES AND TRADERS AND, SAVE FOR ABANDONING ITS HEADHUNTING AND CANNIBALISTIC PROCLIVITIES, REMAINS MUCH AS IT WAS BEFORE THE COMING OF WHITE MEN TO NEW GUINEA



ABORIGINES OF THE INTERIOR

leaving was shouted from ridge to ridge and as I passed along the road the natives came out of the villages and hailed me farewell. Just before leaving the last village and turning into the uninhabited regions of Mount Tafa the old chief came down into the road and shook my hand in farewell. I have grown to like these simple hill people; they are quite unspoiled by contact with civilization and still preserve all their original esteem for the white; they will do almost anything for him. This of course is brought about by their only meeting the Fathers, whose natures and ways are the only ones the native knows. No white man, except perhaps an annual expedition from the magistrate, ever visits Ononghe.

The track was very sloppy for heavy rains have fallen the last day over Mount Tafa. Mist and rain set in and I soon became soaked through, yet there was the prospect of camp being pitched and warmth and a change at the end. After four and a half hours' walking I reached the camp and found all snug and comfortable. Father Bach had some coffee and a light snack ready and I changed into dry things and felt myself again. In the twilight we visited a small lake nearby, about five hundred yards around. This lake is at an altitude of nearly eight thousand feet and is the origin of four great rivers. Growing on the banks were some beautiful white flowers scented like tube-roses which I collected and photographed. The lake is fed by Mount Tafa which rises another one thousand feet above its placid waters. The lake is about sixty feet deep and believed to be frequented by a serpent spirit. One might indeed suspect anything of it, for encircled by tall funereal timbers and ferns its unruffled waters are a great bowl of gloom and the place is unutterably lonely and dismal.

So ends the day of my farewell to Ononghe. It is a suitable end, by the side of a lonely mysterious lake in the heart of high

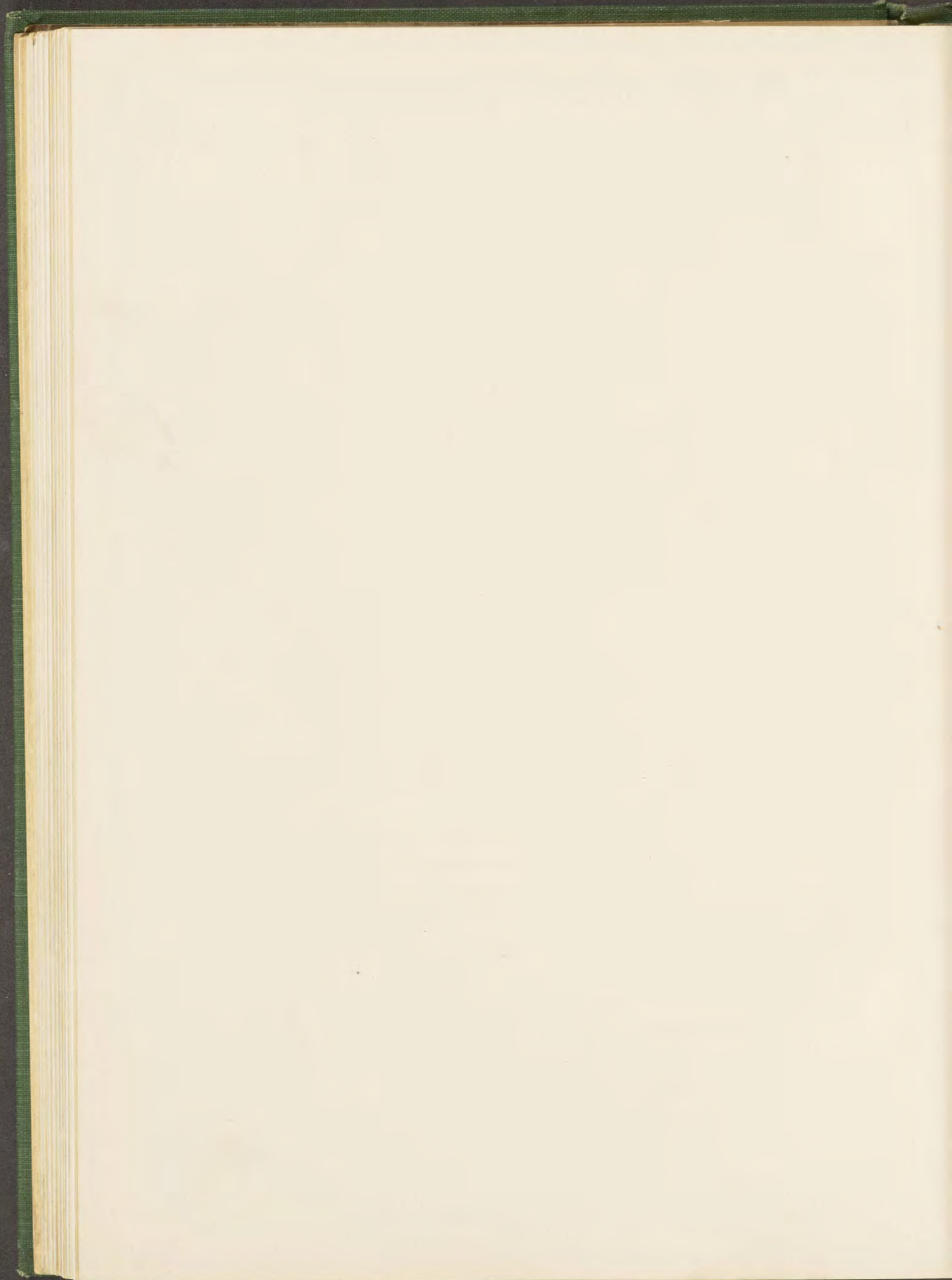
PEARLS AND SAVAGES

mountains amid the perpetual mists, the constant showers, surrounded by the deep forests of tall palms hung with orchids and carpeted with tall ferns—as beautiful and wild a spot as one could desire on this earth.

CHAPTER VII

HEAD-HUNTING STATESMEN AND DIPLOMATS

COIR, THE LORD MAYOR, AND GORMIER, THE MINISTER OF WAR
AT URAMA



CHAPTER VII

1

TRAVELLING by water from the inland swamps fed by the drainage from the Owen Stanley ranges we reached the junction of the Aramia and the mighty Bamu rivers with but one incident. While anchored off the communal house of Bimaramio, a floating archipelago of grass islets came sweeping down the stream and fouled the vessel. In the darkness and rain it was impossible to free the débris which began rapidly accumulating. All night we stood by expecting the anchor to drag or the cable to snap, and the vessel go drifting helplessly down the flood. The early morning found our craft the nucleus of a miniature island with grass, trees and débris firmly locked around the hull. The natives ashore observed our dilemma and came out in their canoes to assist. By laboriously removing the flotsam from the outer edge we were slowly disentangled and freed.

But still another peril menaced us. Being the time of spring tides, the navigation of the Bamu is rendered hazardous through the dangerous bore waters that sweep up stream leaving destruction in their wake. We had scarcely turned the bend into the Bamu when the lookout warned me that the bore was rushing up river. We had barely time to reach a sheltering point and run out both anchors when the seethe of waters was around us. A great tidal wave of mud went

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tearing up channel churning in fury across the shallows over which we had just passed. The force of the wave was expended on the friendly point and we only experienced a violent rocking. The ride was now rapidly setting up river too swift to fight against so we remained at anchor until the outflow when once more we reached the open sea and headed out across the shallow banks of the Turama.

The depth of water on the bar was only nine feet, and with the outrushing current and incoming tide a dangerous sea was running. I was astonished at the amazing angles to which our shallow draught vessel rolled and how ill most of the party became after their long sojourn on peaceful rivers.

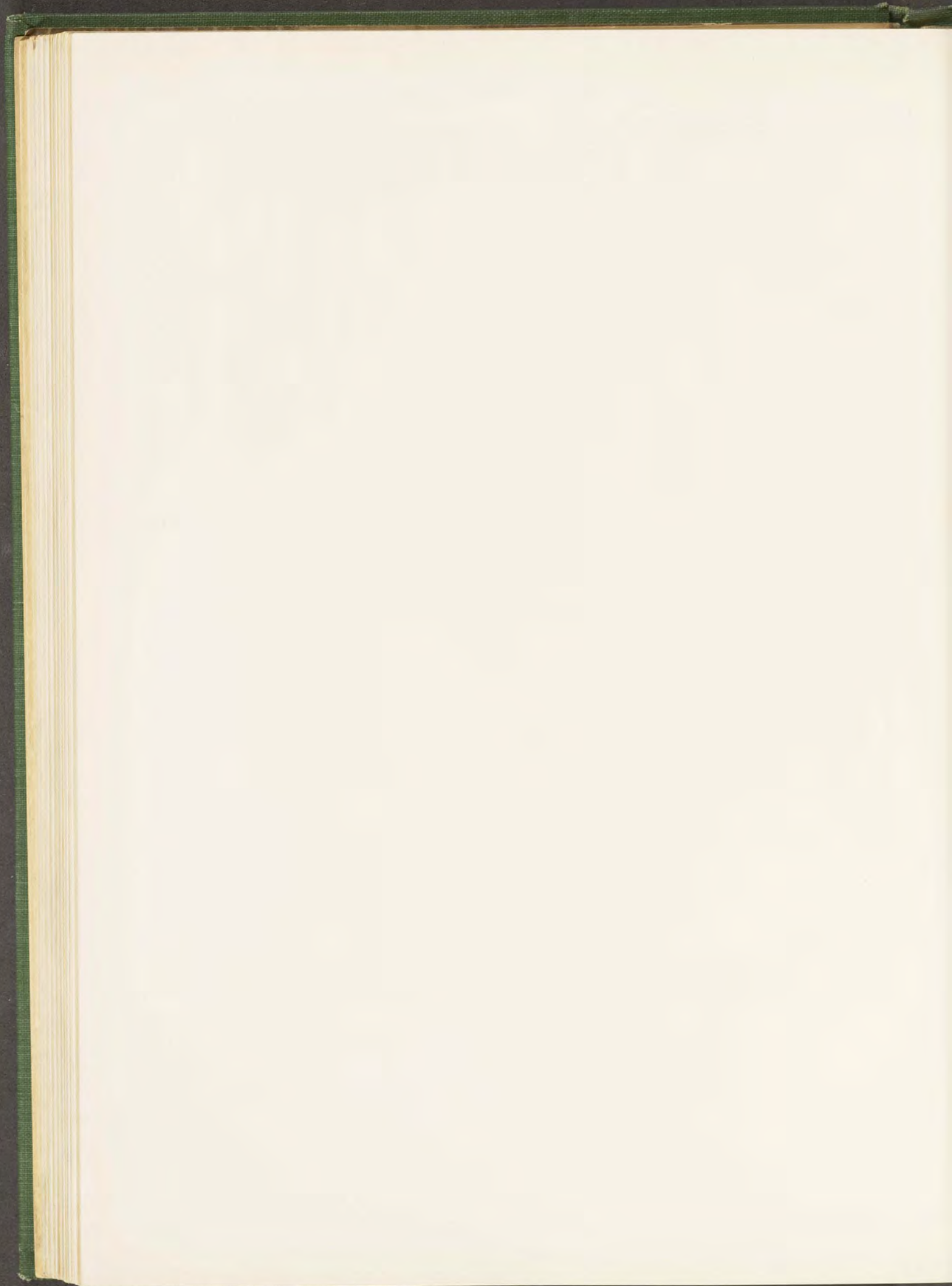
So it was with thankful hearts and stomachs that later in the evening we drew into the sheltered waters of Kerewa behind the Island of Goaribari.

Scarcely had we dropped anchor before a canoe load of natives came alongside and informed us that all the people from the neighbouring villages were gathered at Kerewa, and that a great dance was going to be held that night. We were invited to join in, but feeling too weary we declined the honour in favour of sleep. Of sleep there was none; the ceaseless tomtom of drums and chants made pandemonium of the night and judging by female shrieks and wailing dogs it was more a massacre than a festivity.

When morning broke I was grieved to observe that the dancers of the previous night were leaving the village in canoes and returning to their homes over the water. They were intensely pictorial in their feathery plumes and paint, even more so at a distance. Close inspection displayed grease, soiled feathers and much raddle, charcoal and filth—not to mention the strongly pungent and repugnant smell of unwashed natives. The Goaribaries are conspicuous by the amount of ornate trappings which they wear, chiefly made



COIR, THE LORD MAYOR OF URAMA. ALTHOUGH HE APPEARS FIERCE AND WARLIKE IN THIS PICTURE, HE WAS A MILD, GOOD-HUMOURED FELLOW AND UNLIKE HIS DIGNIFIED COLLEAGUE GORMIER, WAS VAIN AND GIVEN TO BOASTFUL CHATTER. IN MORE CIVILIZED PARTS COIR WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE DESIGNATED A BORE. HE HAD A TRUE POLITICIAN'S SATISFACTION IN HIS AUTHORITY AND WAS DISTINCTLY INCLINED TOWARD POMPOUSNESS



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from shells. No Goaribari is dressed without his leggings which fit the calf tightly and are adorned up the front by two rows of small cowrie shells. The women load their arms with the highly valued armlet shells and adorn the breasts with shapely crescents cut from the mother-o'-pearl shell. This treasured ornament, which can only be afforded by the well-to-do, is suspended by a string round the neck, and resembles a small breastplate. Then the ladies wear many-rowed necklaces of beads and band their shaven crowns in a manner that must be a sore encumbrance.

The men are of medium build, well proportioned and look as though food were abundant. The women are not as ugly as those of the Fly delta and a few might be regarded as comely—but a very few. Perhaps if they wore a little more clothing they might be more attractive, for apart from a grass belt and very narrow strip of fibre—they are unclothed. The men wear more a large cumbersome section cut from the bailer shell, a very ornate belt of carved bark and a strange bundle of teased fibre or grass that falls behind like a bushy tail conveying the impression of a richly caparisoned draught horse.

Numbers of the guests rowed off to pay their respects and barter their ornaments for Papuan currency-tobacco. While trade was actively progressing a very amusing incident happened. Bell, the engineer, brought up on deck a rat in a spring trap and casually threw the rodent over the side. Instantly there was an undignified scramble among the canoes for the prize, which I learned is esteemed as a great delicacy. It was merely torn to pieces and devoured, the fur being spat out like pips!

2

From the vessel an admirable view was presented of the long house, which extends along the river bank for no less than five

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hundred feet! This great structure was well and solidly constructed from lashed mangrove saplings and thatched with the leaf of the sago palm. The edifice stands some five feet off the ground on a jungle of piles, and was, excepting in height, the largest house that we saw in Papua. The flat space between the river and the house was abustle with the departing guests, while the river was animated with canoes returning to their villages. The hour was yet too early to use the cinema to advantage, but as soon as the opportunity presented itself I went ashore.

The first objects that attracted our attention were small groups of skulls impaled on posts facing the river. The gruesome relics were tastefully decorated by a ruffle of palm leaves rolled into scrolls at the end, which maintained a shivering movement in the breeze. The skulls were provided with very long noses, more like long beaks, and the eye sockets were filled with clay and eyes made from small red seeds. They were painted with raddle and were indeed grinning caricatures of death.

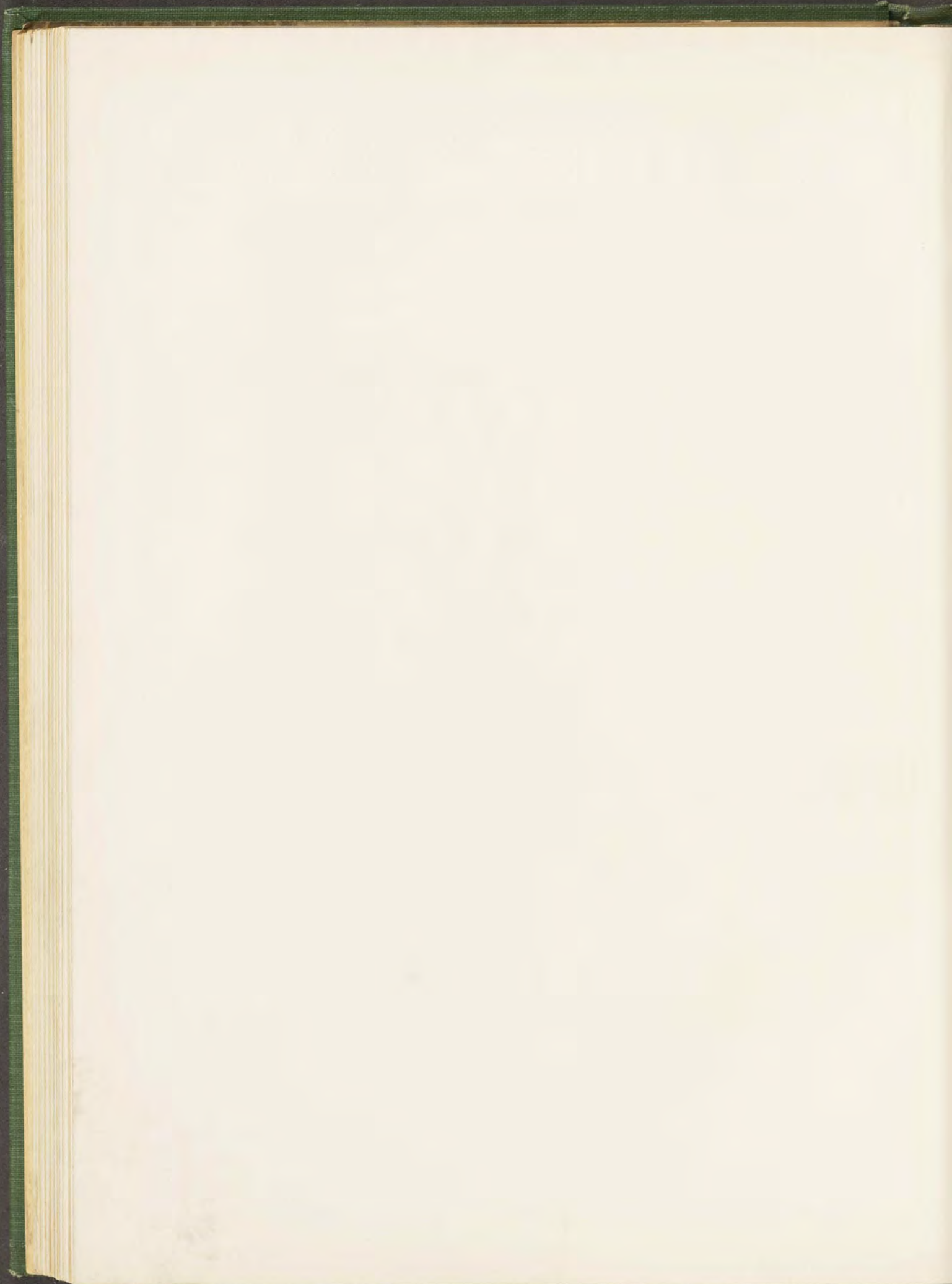
We were extremely fortunate in observing this display, for such treasured belongings are hidden in the fastnesses of the long house and are only brought out on ceremonial occasions, or to display to visitors the valour of the village. They appeared to me to present rather a warning to guests than hospitality.

For a while we became the centre of attraction which rather pleased me as it gave me an opportunity of studying the spectators. They were as savage a collection as we had encountered, made more so by the wildness of their garb and painting.

It will be observed that the raised road of sticks follows parallel to the entire length of the long house and that on its other side are arranged numerous irregular groups of houses, similar in external construction to the long house itself. These



THE WARRIORS OF URAMA DRAWN UP DURING THE FESTIVITIES BEFORE THE GREAT DUBU OR MEN'S CLUBHOUSE



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are the abodes of the women. As we passed by, a few coyly left the small porticoed verandah in front to peer through cracks and crevices, but most remained where they were to smile and gossip among themselves. It appears from numerous inquiries that the wives of all the male members of a family dwell in the one house and that family life as we understand it does not exist.

Seeking and gaining the permission of one of the men who chanced to be visiting his wife's apartment, we entered one of the houses to satisfy our curiosity.

We found so much impedimenta dangling from the roof that it was necessary to proceed bowed double. The houses are rarely more than thirty or forty feet long and from the small door a narrow hallway leads the length to an exit at the opposite end. On either side small cubicles are arranged, similar to those in the long house; but in place of indolence here is activity. The fires burn smokily, choking the acrid atmosphere, so that we could barely see or breathe.

The women were busy kneading sago, mixing it with mashed bananas and rolling the mixture into sausages with outer coverings of leaf. These they laid on the embers and baked. I could not bring myself to sample the staple diet which smelt much like burnt glue.

On the walls hung fish traps and nets, while from the roof pended inverted cornucopia-like receptacles woven from fibre, which I was informed were for holding and parcelling up of sago. The women here are ever busy. They are bought like merchandise and become slaves to the indolent males. When the food was cooked the women carried it to the long house where the hungry lords awaited. We visited several of these hives of industry and always did we find the women busy, and leading what we would regard as lives of slavery—to them the only lives they know.

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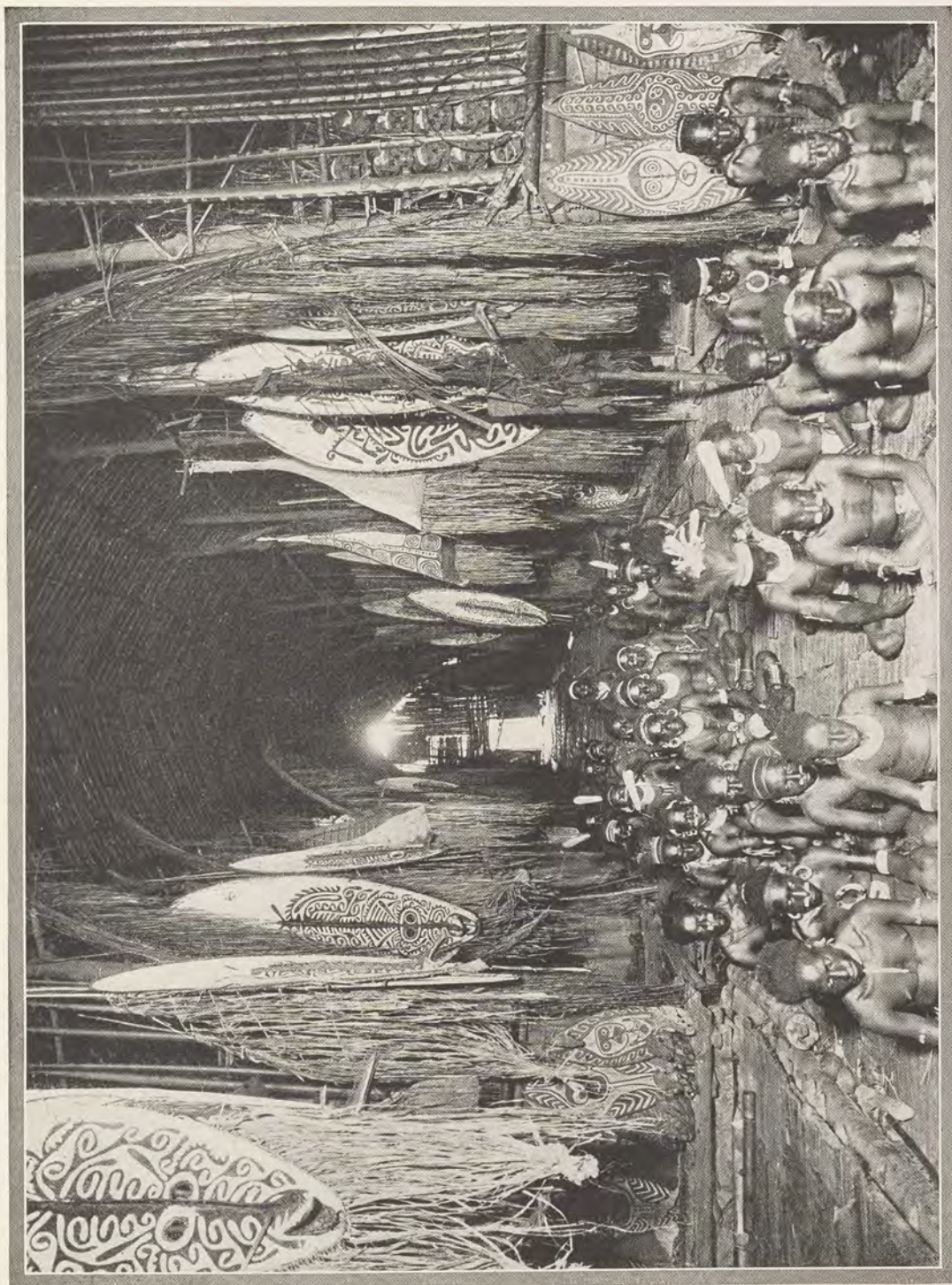
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We left Kerewa with few regrets. Our next stopping place was Dopima, a village conspicuous because of the missionaries, Chalmers and Tomkins, who while endeavouring to proselytize the people were killed and eaten. We did not go ashore (although the people are now peaceful enough), owing to the vast expanse of low-tide mud which forms an extensive morass of the most loathsome nature. With the change of tides, we proceeded, and on the following day came suddenly upon a long house facing, not a mudflat this time, but a fine beach of hard dark sand. The village, we learned, was known as Babai and the long house had been recently built and was in a fine condition. The construction was identical with that of Goaribari and the inmates similar in most respects, excepting that we noticed the women also moving about the long house and squatting by the fire with the males. This we did not observe at Kerewa, except to bear in the food.

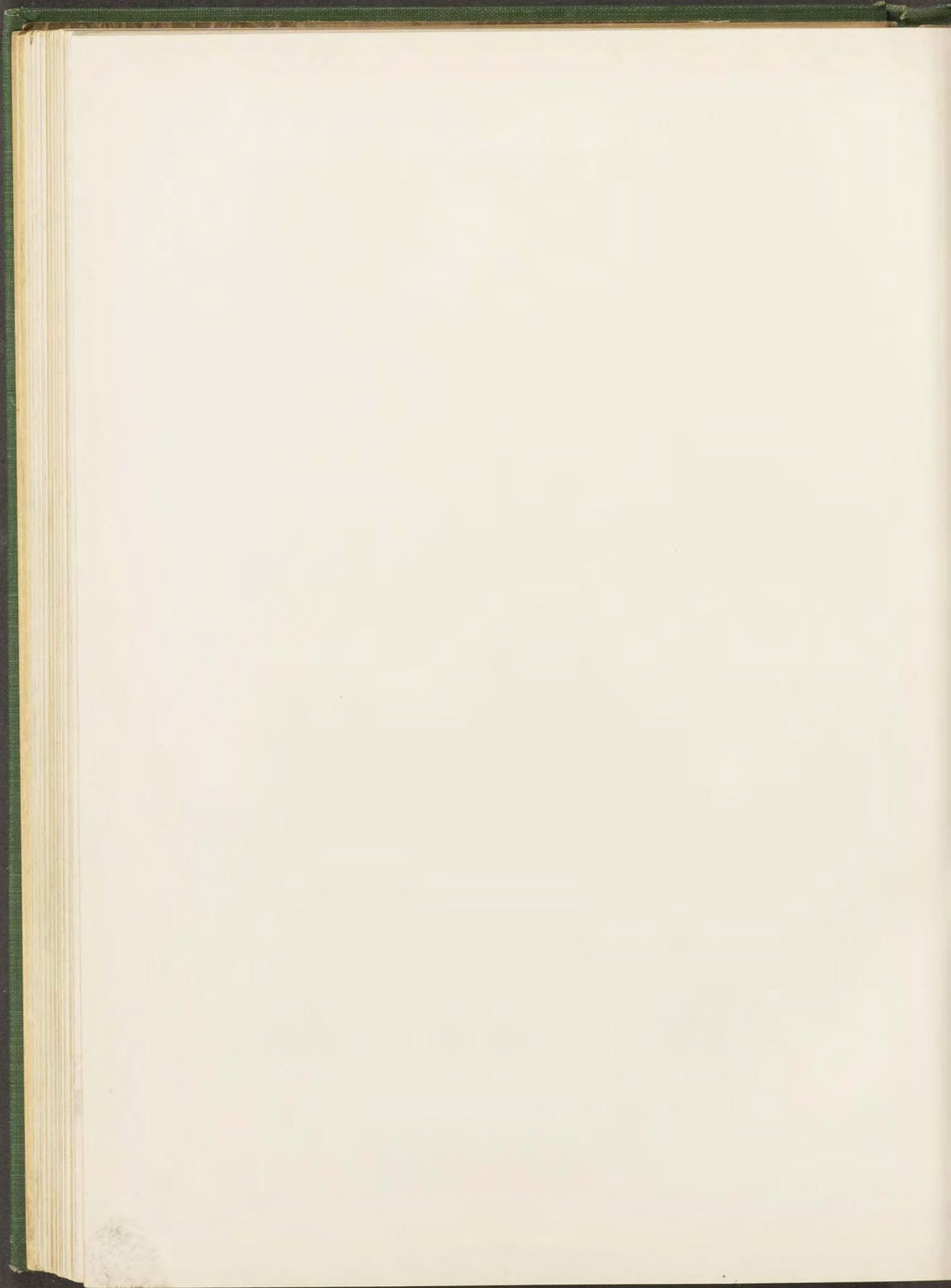
The long house had more of convenience for entering and leaving than Kerewa; there being well-notched steps cut in a heavy timber leading up from the ground to the floor level. The smell of new timbers and thatch more than overpowered the smell of the tenants, giving to the atmosphere the perfume of a sawmill, which to me is as the breath of the forest.

The inmates were all idling, excepting a few old men making arrowheads. This process was extremely interesting as the points were being shaped and barbed by the use of a mollusc shell. The deftness in the use of this crude knife raises it in effectiveness above a steel blade: and it is notable that the instrument which nature has cast up on the beaches in vast profusion should still be preferred in these villages.

There was a particularly fine skull shrine near the entrance to this long house and I tried every possible ruse to secure it



THE INTERIOR OF THE GREAT DUBU DAINA OF URAMA. THE WARRIORS LIVE IN THE SMALL CUBICLES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE LONG HALL. THEIR FAMILIES DWELL IN SMALL DETACHED HOUSES AND NO WOMAN OR CHILD IS PERMITTED TO CROSS THE THRESHOLD OF THE WARRIORS' CLUBHOUSE



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precisely as it stood. I offered two pounds money plus one hundred sticks of tobacco, rice, armshells, knives, axes or whatever the owner might desire. I was put off by being informed that the owner was away making sago. As I saw many interesting items here for the cinema, I asked the people to send for the owner and I would trade with him. The son of the owner arrived late in the afternoon and I displayed the purchase price before him—one axe, one hundred sticks of tobacco, twenty pounds of rice, five ramis, five strings of beads, five white cowrie shells, five bidi-bidi (head of cone shells), one large knife, two large armshells; but all these enticements availed not.

The son of the owner informed me that if he disposed of these things his father would be annoyed on his return, and also that the sorcerers would kill him by puripuri!

To test the truth, I placed a large and tempting bundle of armshells with the rest of my offerings. This was too much for the young fellow, who, without hesitation, acquiesced.

4

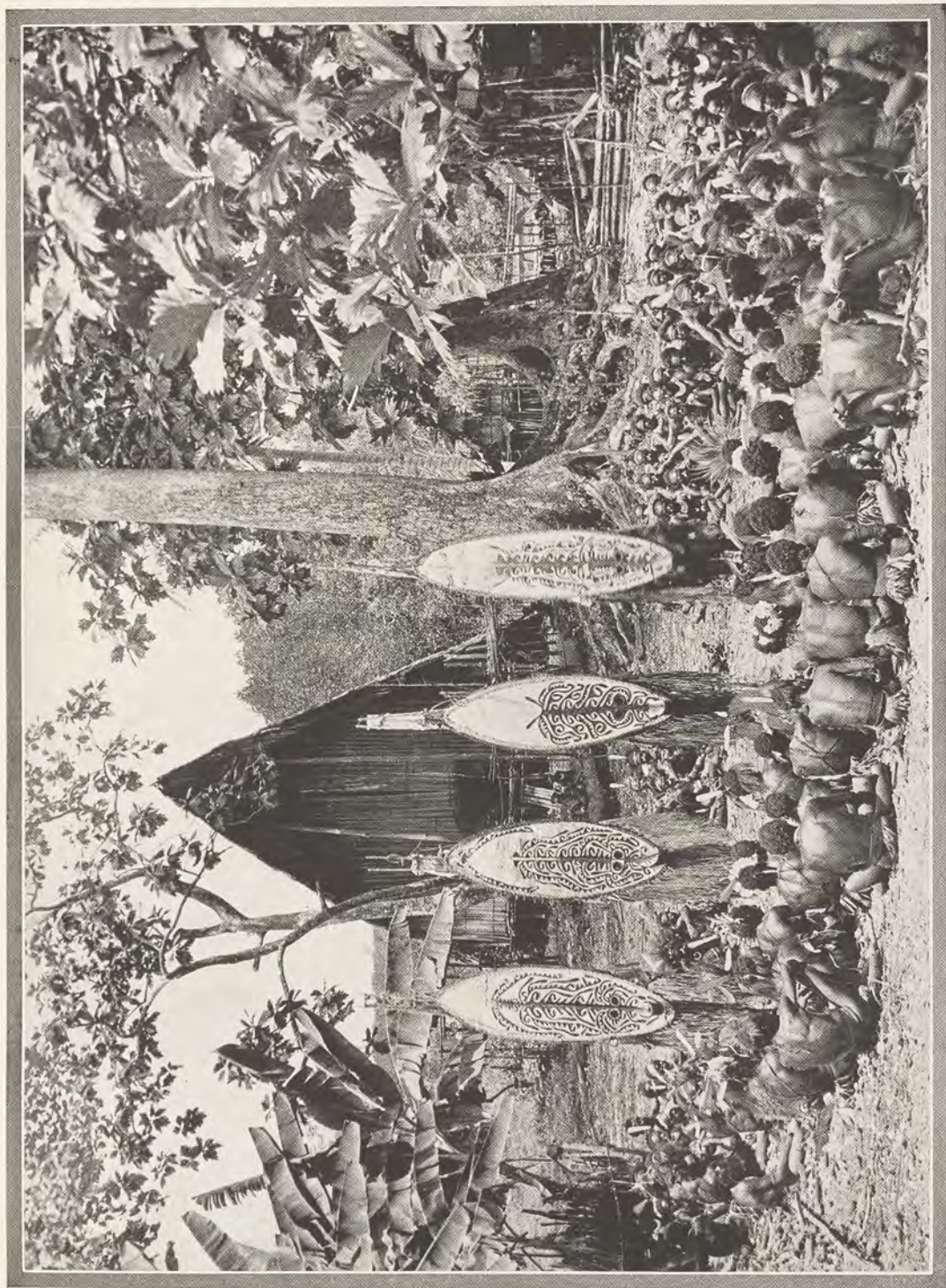
After a brief, but profitable few hours spent in Babai, we continued towards Urama. Our coxswain aptly said: "By-me-by you and me go halong bush and we come out colose hup."

The waterways with their narrow banks grown with mangroves and nipa palms are indeed like roadways through the jungle. They have, however, the unfortunate habit of meandering the longest way round. Thinking the "bush roadway" shorter than going out to sea and navigating among the maze of sandbanks, I assented. To my disgust, I found ourselves wandering in an amazing and wasteful fashion, turning into creeks, then through great rivers and finally becoming

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stuck on a silt flat. With the incoming tide we floated off, but I put to sea at the first opening and ranted soundly the coxswain for "bushing" us.

At lunch time the following day we "went bush" again, following the course of a narrow water track that resembled a glass road winding through dense mangrove jungles. Countless waterways branched off in every direction which filled me with qualms as the constant expressions of my dubious pilot—"Last time I bin go along bush, he altogether not the same; bush he different"—suggested we were likely to be bushed for some days. It was a deep relief when the waterway widened into a broad expanse and the Urama villages came into view on a salient point. As usual the rattling out of the anchor was the signal for a flotilla of canoes to put off from the shore. They seemed to dart from nowhere and yet come from everywhere; from the mangroves that overhung the waters, from unseen creeks, down slimy mudbanks, tobogganing as they poled ahead over the slime. It was, indeed, a carnival of the queerest craft I have ever seen. The impression conveyed from a short distance was that the people were walking on the water. As the canoes came closer they resolved themselves into hollowed out grooves, ten feet long and wide enough for a single figure to stand in. The hull was half round, devoid of outrigger, keel or stabilizing device of any kind except the rower who stood upright and propelled the extraordinary craft with long sweeps of a broad paddle. So deftly are these canoes handled and balanced that they seem to become part of the paddler himself, the balance being maintained instinctively much as a bird on the wing. As the canoes had but three to four inches of freeboard each wavelet broke "aboard." This did not perturb the paddlers who solved the bailing out problem by standing on one leg while vigorously kicking the water out astern with the other. The waters swarm with hungry croco-



THE KAIVA-KUKU MASKS OF URAMA. THESE ARE REGARDED AS SACRED SPIRITS AND NO WOMAN OR CHILD MAY LOOK UPON THEM. DURING THE KUKU CEREMONIES THEY ARE BELIEVED TO ASSUME ORACULAR POWERS AND ADVICE FROM THEM IS SOUGHT CONCERNING HUNTS, WARS, AND AGRICULTURAL UNDERTAKINGS. THE COMPLETE PLACE OF THESE MASKS IN THE TRIBAL LIFE REMAINS VEILED IN OBSCURITY. IT IS KNOWN HOWEVER THAT THEY PLAY A PART IN THE CEREMONIES WHICH MARK THE COMING OF AGE OF YOUNG WARRIORS



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diles, a fact which suggested a parallel of a starving man refusing a banquet.

The environment of these people is water and ooze and as their only means of moving about is by canoe they are literally born with canoes on their feet:—to them canoeing is as natural a process as walking. I purchased the finest of the canoes for the Museum paying one axe, twenty-four sticks of tobacco, one mirror and several yards of cloth! Evidently the purchase price was highly satisfactory for the owner took his vessel ashore and redecorated it, whilst the entire fleet crowded round to auction their vessels at half the price! Whilst the hubbub was in progress a large canoe paddled by a crew of ten came out and as it drew alongside the smaller fry made passage and became silent. In the canoe were two elderly men plainly decorated but of a dignified presence that at once evinced authority. My interpreter informed me, that these were “Two big fella man stop along village bin come makem frien’ halong me and you.” This was the polite way of informing me the village Chiefs were making their official call.

“This fella heye all same hawk, teeth all same crocodile, he Gormier. He very big man along fight. Other feller, he Coir all same you. He talk halong people—all same you talk halong boat—he tell village people do somesing—he do all same boy along boat—he savvy too much!”

In other words Gormier was the War Chief and Coir the Village Chief who attended to village welfare and social affairs. I invited the dignitaries aboard—quite an unprecedented honour—and gave them presents of axes, tobacco and armshells which at once put us on good terms and made an impression on the crowd standing about the vessel—on the water. We received a return invitation to visit the village, which we did without delay. Gormier and Coir transferred their large

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canoe and crew to us for the remainder of our stay, our dinghy being quite useless amid the muddy shallows surrounding the village. We secured a short staff to the stern of the canoe, from which fluttered the ensign of the Australian Commonwealth, and heavily necklaced ourselves with beads.

McCulloch and self cautiously stepped down into the wobbly craft and squatting low to prevent it from overturning, rakishly put off for the shore. Soon we were on the threshold of the village, which owing to the falling tide was surrounded by mudflats several hundred yards wide. Without more ado the crew put down their paddles, jumped overboard knee deep into the ooze and to our great surprise and amusement sledged the canoe along a mud groove up to the village. As we glided over the mud we scared myriads of tiny hopping fishes which apparently abhorred swimming about in the water to the luxurious pleasures of wallowing and jumping about on the tepid mud. McCulloch informed me their name—a typical anomaly of scientific nomenclature that magnifies diminutive objects with colossal names, and colossal objects with diminutive ones,—adding that as these fish spend most of their time out of the water the gills have become useless for breathing; nature has compensated by providing their tails with innumerable microscopic blood vessels which they keep in the moisture and through which the dissolved oxygen is absorbed; literally speaking these fish breathe through their tails, as incongruous as the fishes living out of water! Still this is a land of surprises and another awaited us as we glided up alongside the village and stepped ashore.

5

Coir loudly announced our arrival in the village, a ceremony which proved an order for the women and children to flee to their homes and for the men to welcome us at the waterfront.



A PATRIARCH OF URAMA. THIS OLD MAN WAS ONE OF THE ELDERS WHO ACTED AS PRIESTS OF THE TRIBE. BY MAGIC AND THREATS, THEY PLAY UPON THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE YOUNGER VILLAGERS AND KEEP THEM IN COMPLETE SUBJECTION. THEY ARE BOUND BY TRADITIONS WHICH NOTHING COULD INDUCE THEM TO BREAK. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO LEARN FROM THEM THE REASONS FOR THE VARIOUS TRIBAL CUSTOMS. THE ANSWER IS ALWAYS, "MY FATHER, HE DO IT. HIS FATHER, HE DO IT, SO I DO IT." TO INCREASE THE IMPRESSIVENESS OF HIS APPEARANCE, THIS OLD PATRIARCH HAS ORNAMENTED HIS WHISKERS WITH GLOBULES OF THE ETERNAL DELTA MUD



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It was not through fear of molestation that Coir ordered the women away; he was merely conforming with tribal etiquette. We immediately won amiable relations with the men by bestowing lavish presents of tobacco and forthwith Coir led us around the village with the whole tribal horde close on our heels.

I at once noticed the freedom from the hideous sipuma, a scaly skin disease which I had observed universally elsewhere, and on inquiring the reason was shown many huge scars where the disease had been stopped in its incipient stages. This is done by cauterizing the affected spot with a glowing stick, a painfully drastic treatment yet obviously efficacious. They were a wild looking motley famed on account of their warlike and independent nature and the failure of the authorities until recently to subdue them. Even now the villages will have naught to do with missionaries, traders or labour recruiters which pleases me greatly; for so soon as the missionaries and civilization encroach upon a village the whole tribal sociology is subverted. I found the ethical and social laws of Urama remarkably adapted to the existing culture of the people and it impressed me as being unwise and almost foolish to attempt to thrust them under the control of a civilization and religion thousands of years in advance.

Certain of the missionaries influence the natives to abandon dances and customs allegedly evil. They are only evil by comparison, and basically such customs have some subtly wise inception. What is given in return for the banishment of age-old customs? A spiritual teaching that has little compensation and lesser consolation for the natives. If the missions would combine more physical application with their teachings the native would develop into something more than a spiritual idler. Before the mission tampers with native customs or traditions it should be subject to the carefully considered intimate deliberations of the Administration.

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While I meditated over these things we were squelching up a rise to the village beneath the glorious foliage of the huge Ilima trees that formed a canopy overhead of leafy lacery and blue sky. Right up to the extremities, the trunks and branches were covered with vines and orchids, and at their base peaceful and quiet, as though in recumbent slumber lay the village huts. I was much mystified to account for the high land on which we stood, for all around stretched the interminable swamp. A close analysis revealed the fact that the mound was of man's making, grown into height through the age old accumulations of shells, coconut husks and canoe chippings—veritable refuse heaps!

Coir led the way through the village which seemed deserted; but I heard feminine whisperings and titterings as we passed close to the huts, which convinced me that civilization has not changed this trait of feminine nature. The huts resembled those of other delta villages and internally, perhaps, they were less filthy and malodorous. Coir stopped before a house, which differed only from the others through having a large tassel of teased fibre dangling from the apex of its porch-like entrance. Coir spoke a few words to my interpreter which were translated into "House belong him," and then raising his voice called "YARIB! YARIB!"

Immediately a not uncomely woman coyly appeared at the entrance, with two big brown-eyed infants. She wore, pending from her neck, the conventional pearl shell crescent; a few strands of grass completed an embarrassing attire. I noticed her hands were scored with hard labours and her feet were characteristically large, a natural evolution inherited from generations of mudwalkers. Coir conversed with Madam Yarib whilst I entertained the children with lollypops, much to the amusement of the chuckling entourage and the delighted father.



THE TABOO GOBLINS OF URAMA. THESE ARE EMPLOYED BY THE OLD MEN OF THE TRIBE TO KEEP THE VILLAGE IN CONTROL AND TO GUARD CERTAIN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR USE AT FESTIVAL TIME. THEY ARE REGARDED WITH GREAT TERROR. BEFORE FESTIVALS OR IN TIME OF THREATENED FAMINE THE MASKS ISSUE FROM THE DUBU DAIMA AND GO THROUGH THE VILLAGE DANCING A QUAIN "RING-AROUND-THE-ROSEY" ABOUT TREES WHOSE FRUIT MUST BE GUARDED FOR FUTURE USE. THIS CEREMONY IS BELIEVED TO PUT A CURSE ON THE FRUIT, SO THAT IF IT WERE EATEN BEFORE THE PRESCRIBED TIME IT WOULD KILL THE MISCREANT. THE EFFECT OF THESE GROTESQUE MASKS IN THE MOTION OF A DANCE IS INCREDIBLY COMIC



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Mrs. Yarib Coir cast a not unkindly eye on the rows of beads around my neck and McCulloch's immaculate white legs. Accordingly I handed my interpreter several of the necklaces which were the cause of the covetous glance and asked him to present them to Mrs. Yarib Coir from "Woman belong me." The brown lady became appreciably coquettish and disappeared into her house. Soon she returned with a tuft of at least a score of long grass strands and expressing herself to my interpreter handed it to him. In turn the raiment was presented to me with the translation "Woman belong Coir—make present Woman belong you."

I was much touched by this thought and graciously accepted the chic mode which was the height of Urama negligée. I am inclined to believe that this prehistoric creation would be a very fashionable deshabelle for these ultra modern times.

6

By now we had trudged to the far end of the village which was bounded by a very oozy creek. On the far side rose several colossal temples—the Dubu Daimas or club houses of the men, which could only be reached by a frail bridge of doubtful construction, a bridge over which women were not permitted to pass. Coir's authority terminated by this moat; he was only concerned with village affairs, a lord mayor of a mud capital. Beyond the bridge lay Gormier's province and all laws and things concerned with the Dubu Daimas and war came under his jurisdiction.

The two characters were quite dissimilar. Coir, garrulous and flippant, made a display of his authority. Gormier was even sullen, but also given to acting; when he spoke he uttered wisdom. I took a liking to Gormier, as indeed I had reason to do; he rendered me unlimited and faithful assistance, and

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stood out a dominant figure above all the natives with whom I came in contact. As he took the lead to guide us across the bridge he much reminded me of Charon crossing the Styx into a metropolis of the underworld.

As McCulloch and I carefully picked our way over the rotten slippery sticks our tribal escort followed close on our heels causing the bridge to sway and creak ominously. There were shouts of warning from Gormier which kept the crowd back until we were almost over. But the oncoming file was too much for the bridge, it rocked and cracked and before the crowd could rush back to safety collapsed amid wild yells. We had just landed on the far side and looking back observed half a dozen natives stuck thigh deep in the mud and others wallowing out amid roars of laughter and, I doubt not, good humoured banter.

Climbing up a crude ladderway we stood on the threshold of a great arched porch that rose fifty feet above us. From the apex dangled a weird collection of amulets carved from wood. Human effigies, small crocodiles, lizards and other symbolic objects, which were to protect the house against the evil spirits of which they live in eternal dread. Bending low we passed through a ridiculously small doorway into the eerie gloom of an immense hall—a veritable place of death. As the concourse of warriors filed in behind me a hushed silence was observed, all speaking in subdued tones as though in the sacred precincts of a sanctuary.

In the semi-darkness we stood in a large vestibule from which a wide hall extended the length of the temple to a door at the far end. This vestibule was evidently the general assembly chamber. The walls were hung with gigantic masks, shields, weapons and ceremonial garb. On either side of the hall entrance, were two large racks filled with human skulls; beneath these racks pended "Gope" plaques with won-

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drously carved faces no two of which were alike. These represented the ancestral spirits of the tribe: below these again and resting on the floor were rows of boar and crocodile skulls, probably trophies offered to the ancestral spirits. As we passed down the gloomy hall I noticed on either side small cubicles, each with its own skull shrine and ancestral spirit plaques, dark dens over which the very shadow of death seemed to brood.

At the far end the passage opened into another vestibule, on the opposite walls of which were large skull racks and enormous Kaiva-Ku-Ku masks. Gormier indicated that this was his lavara or cubicle. By exhaustive interpretation I gathered that the skulls were those of enemies that had been killed and eaten. According to the number of skulls won in combat, so was the warrior's status in the tribal hierarchy; and he was given a cubicle in the temple commensurate with the dignity of his rank. Gormier having the greatest number, was supreme.

It appears that the religion of the tribes is a combination of Manes or Ancestor worship and skull cult. Gormier informed my interpreter that so long as the ancestral plaques were attached to the enemies' skulls the latters' spirits were enslaved to the ancestral spirits in the next life, and that the more enemies they killed in this life the more slaves they would have in the next. Later I inquired from Coir if this were so. He displayed surprise at my knowledge and assented. A short distance from the warriors' Dubu were three smaller dubus, which I learned were the compounds of the unmarried novitiates. On reaching pubic age they are transferred to isolation and spend their adolescence rigorously acquiring the tribal tenets and proving their manhood by ordeal. If a man is physically unable to endure the training he is ineligible for marriage. Something of this kind might well be introduced into present-day eugenics.

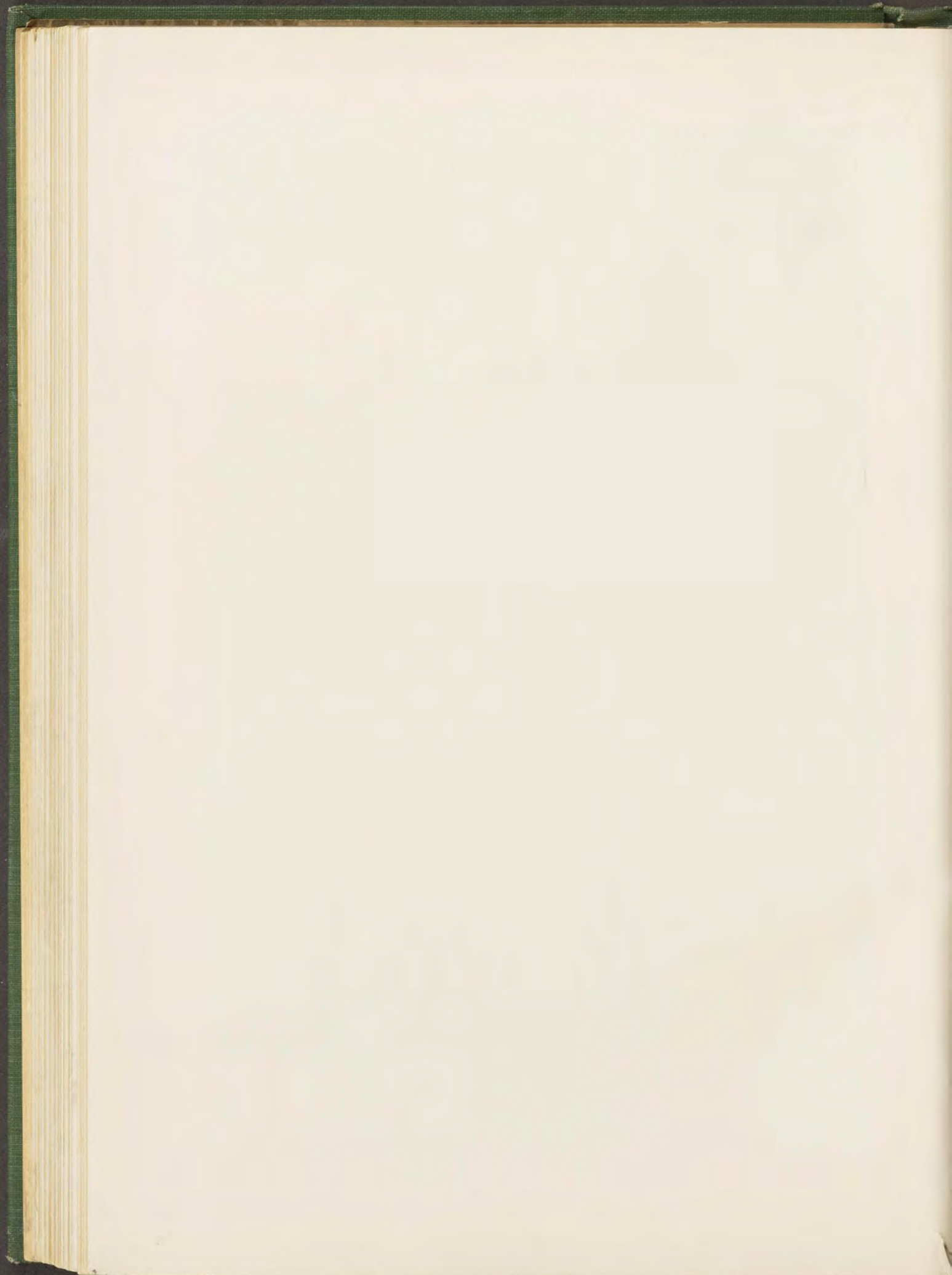
The social position of a warrior in the tribe is determined by the number of skulls inherited from his father. By this standard Gormier, whose rack contained thirty-six fine trophies, was the chief of the young and able-bodied warriors and no prime minister ever appreciated more fully the dignity and responsibility of his position.

Beneath the skulls are ranged the Gope, which probably represent the spirits of members of Gormier's family who have died within the past four or five years. The Gope are carved with designs ingeniously conceived to represent the features of the departed warrior, and no two are alike.

Below the Gope there is a row of boar's skulls which bear witness to Gormier's prowess as a hunter and are probably offerings to the ancestral spirits. Now that the Administration has made its power a reality, the row of pig skulls may still increase, but the gallery of human skulls must remain as it is, without the addition of one more skull. The legacy of Gormier is destined never again to increase.



THE SKULL RACK OF GORMIER, CHIEF OF THE DUBU DAIMA OF URAMA



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7

Near the warriors' Dubu, a rude shelter had been erected below on the mud, and going down to inspect it, I noticed no less than fifteen large canoes under excavation. All had advanced to about the same stage and it appears that the work progresses by stages and spasmodically. A curious incongruity in these vessels is to be found in the stern which is left entirely open! In order to make the craft watertight this gap is merely sealed with mud. I gathered together the people who followed in a long train and discussed with them the reason for this grotesque custom. The veteran shipwrights were called, but the difficulties of translation through several interpreters brought forth replies as intelligible and informative as "Yes we have no bananas to-day," evidently inspired by the scientific McCulloch examining and drawing my attention to a blight on the bananas growing near by.

With the babel of confusion it was impossible to secure a relevant reply. My own interpreter had disappeared, but to my delight returned, when the tumult was at its height, bearing a small canoe with a solid stern. My evident delight and appreciation brought forth a heated argument, and finally all the shipwrights told me that they had decided in future to build their canoes with solid sterns!

The workmanship of the canoes is truly beautiful. With crude stone adzes—sometimes a piece of steel being substituted for stone—the chips fly and the surface is left as if planed. The canoes have been designed to navigate the threading waterways and are devoid of outriggers which would be impracticable in the narrow passages. A conventional carving decorates the freeboard of the canoe and greatly adds to its elegant appearance.

A crew of fifteen muscular warriors, befeathered for war,

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their war cry ringing down the lonely reaches, speeding their craft ahead with long powerful strokes is an impressive spectacle that would terrorize any foe unarmed with a rifle. The magnificent poise of the rowers standing perfectly erect, dipping their paddles as one, bowing their bodies until the muscles stand out in tense relief, repeating the cycle in perfect unison as they speed ahead, an exquisite unit of mechanical perfection, provides a superb spectacle.

Before returning to the vessel I had a conference with Coir and Gormier as to the possibility of arranging a dance for the cinema on the morrow. They intimated that they would convey my desires to the people and that they would personally assist to their limit.

Late in the night a canoe came out to our lugger and informed us that the dance had been arranged; and a little while later Coir's voice could be heard haranguing the village and ordering all the women and children to clear out at daybreak. This was to be an esoteric performance which only the initiated might behold! Before break of day, the obedient spouses left the village and a long trail of canoes, laden with women, children and dogs filed out across the river into a bush waterway. In the village pandemonium reigned. Everyone was putting on feathers, shell ornaments and decorating with raddle. As soon as the sun was up, the cameras and paraphernalia were loaded into our canoe and with the flag fluttering proudly astern, ourselves decorated and laden with presents we rowed away ostentatiously from the vessel. At the landing a wonderfully decorated crowd formed a guard of honor and Coir conducted us through lines of warriors to the Dubu Daima.

A great commotion of dancers and chanting was going on inside. The chant was led by Gormier, who piped in a highly pitched falsetto, and presently the whole assembly of dancers took up the theme in chorus. It sounded exactly like a teacher

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and kindergarten and it was difficult to realize that the voices were those of grown men.

8

Let us see what is going on inside. Up the notched stick that serves as a stairway, onto the platform and then through the small door into the gloom. Ye gods! What a stupendous and amazing sight! A couple of hundred dancers arranged in long lines down the length of the hallway, the light from the doorway glinting on decorations and glistening eyes. The diffused half light faintly throwing into relief the setting of great Kaiva-Ku-Ku masks, grotesquely carved Gope, and the eyeless sockets of the skulls which were the only beholders besides McCulloch, myself and the interpreters. Nothing I have seen equalled this spectacular, grotesque and wild gathering. The dancers ceased as we entered and my rapturous enthusiasm and praise appeared to fire them with new enthusiasm.

I had expected perhaps twenty or thirty dancers: here were a couple of hundred! Anxious to display their accomplishments, the leader pitched forth a few discordant tenor notes into the gloom. The drums tommed, the massed voices chorused and each figure moved in the rhythm with the whole.

As a dance it was poor, but collectively the effect was remarkable. The white feathers swayed with each movement of the head; the head-dresses of Cassowary danced, the elbow plumes danced—even the house jiggled so that each movement gave us alarm lest the floor and whole structure might collapse.

The eerie gloom of the Dubu and its dark recesses, glorified the impression which among all the strange scenes in the gallery of memory hangs above the "line." Providence was indeed kind, for a place was made for me just in front of the

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Dubu, a low flat surrounded by high ground, so that I might look down onto the stage as from a dress circle. The high Ilima trees did not seriously obstruct the sunlight and the background of the Dubu itself completed the perfect arrangements. I took up a commanding stand and at a given signal the dancers filed out, dancing the while onto the stage which nature had set. I marked an area with saplings (the field of my camera) and with Vaieki interpreting, and my indispensable interpreter Bormi acting as producer, a white assemblage of actors could not have done better.

I was greatly pleased with the ready response to my desires and the attitude of the people to readily assist and carry them out. The dancers seemed instinctively to comprehend what was wanted and worked for its accomplishment. The monotony of the dance was relieved by the brevity. The dance appeared to proceed in short sets—each differing from the other only in slight alteration of chant. The village chief, Coir, and his understudy—an ancient veteran of “the toe”—performed the very wicked and realistic dance of the witch doctors. The expressions and actions were perfect—but these two old men appear witches at any time.

As the men had the village entirely to themselves I inquired whether the Kaiva-Ku-Ku masks might not promenade for our benefit. The intelligent and kindly Gormier, Chief of the Dubu, discussed this with the old men and after much deliberation they assented. This strange dance which takes place at only very remote periods has only been seen by a few whites and until now had never been photographed. Further the Kaiva-Ku-Ku masks are not allowed to leave the Ravi until after the ceremony, when they are all burnt. If any man should die during the interval between the ceremonies, his Kaiva-Ku-Ku must be buried with him. So the people granted me no small privilege in bringing forth these things



THE GOPE OF A URAMA SHRINE. THESE STRANGE SHIELDS WHICH REPRESENT THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD WERE CARVED WITH NO OTHER TOOL THAN A KEEN-EDGED SHELL, THOUGH KNIVES NOW ARE MOSTLY USED. THE DESIGN IS CUT IN DIRECT FREEHAND WITHOUT MARKING OR MEASUREMENT. THE GOPE SECOND FROM THE LEFT WAS THE FINEST SEEN IN ALL THE TERRITORY AND WAS REMARKABLE FOR THE BILATERAL SYMMETRY AND THE DELICACY OF ITS EXECUTION. AFTER THE CARVING, THE GOPE ARE DECORATED WITH BLACK, RED AND WHITE PIGMENTS MADE OF CERTAIN EARTHS AND CHARCOAL. THE EFFECT IS STARTLINGLY BEAUTIFUL.



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which must never see the light of day until after the ceremonies. The women might look upon the masks after the dance, but no woman might gaze upon them until the ceremony had bereft them of the insidious spirit. The warriors arranged themselves in a circle and squatted down chanting and drumming. The Kaiva-Ku-Ku came from out the Dubu, and danced in short jumpy steps into the centre of the ring of swaying bodies and heads. Then began a series of shuffling caperings, the masked dancers, facing one another, drawing apart, intertwining and ringing with an intricate complexity.

The ceremony, I surmise, is a celebration of the initiation of new members into the brotherhood of the tribe: but we could ascertain nothing definite not even from Gormier who intimated that he was in honour bound not to divulge the inner secrets of the Dubu.

9

On the following day the canoe with my picked crew and interpreter Bormi, came alongside at breakfast and, as the weather inclined to the gloomy, I decided to spend the day flashlighting the interior of the Dubu and opening negotiations for what I was reticent about mentioning previously to the people—skulls. It has been my ardent desire to secure a number of skulls, and re-establish them in the Museum, an exact replica of the skull racks in the Dubu.

When the flashlighting was over I made council in the remote end of the Dubu and started preliminary negotiations for the purchase of a complete skull rack of twenty-four skulls, the Gope shields pending beneath it and the pig skulls, which were arranged in a long row at the bottom.

I must admit that this was an unprecedented overture to make and I was not surprised at the astonishment of the good Gormier. By patient interpretation which lasted a couple of

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hours I opened the discussion by saying that we white men were travelling over the length and breadth of New Guinea, learning the customs and ways of its people, collecting their arts, crafts and all things appertaining to their life. That beyond New Guinea and the sunrise was a great world where the white people came from. I spoke of their great villages and of the enormous Dubus made of stone that the great cities owned, wherein all things belonging to the native people all over the world were kept. That white people came day after day to look at the things and learn of other people. That all things were kept there for all time. That when Gormier was dead and his people dead and new people came, the trophies which we would collect would live on, and memories of them would never be forgotten. We had collected from everywhere and now wanted the people of Urama to help us. The price, I said, they could fix themselves. I intimated that I realized fully what these trophies meant to them. Each one was a record of a deed of valour, each Gope a tablet to a dead brother—each pig skull a treasured souvenir of the chase. If it was against the laws of the Dubu Daima, then I must go without, for I did not wish to impose upon nor digress from what might be their religion. Gormier was obviously relieved by my last remarks and also understood quickly that we were not going to make playthings of the most treasured of all possessions. He asked shrewd intelligent questions about the Museum and was satisfied that we were genuine. I said I should like to take the whole partition from the Dubu, skull rack and all. I had photographed it and would erect it exactly as it stood in the Great Dubu of the Whitemen.

The old fellow left us and went down to talk with his clansmen who were seated smoking in the vestibule. A short while after he returned and said that the laws of the Dubu did not allow of any part of its structure being removed. If the parti-

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tion were cut out, a new Dubu would have to be built entirely. He had spoken with his brothers about the heads and other things and they had all agreed to do as he desired to do. He could not give me his rack of skulls—they were the inheritance of his children and must be passed on: but he would help me.

The old man then rose and took from the rack one of his best skulls. He pondered affectionately over the terrible object, then untied one of the Gope from its setting and selected one of the largest pig skulls. These he collected in a small pile and placed them beside me. Gormier then called the names of the warriors individually. They entered their small cubicles and did as he did and desired.

It might seem strange that I felt rather sad about the whole affair. To secure a head from a head-hunter might sound a permissible action to most people; but when it is understood that many of those skulls were relics passed down by ancestors—fine old warriors—heads won in fair combat, by strength of arms and valour, and objects of religious reverence, it is natural that they must have felt a deep pang at parting with them. One young man spent fully ten minutes in allowing his eye to roam over the thirty-six skulls which his brave father had won. He must part from one of these heirlooms to the stranger: which one must it be? The expression was downcast, sad and tearful. What volumes of tragic story these racks could tell! What awful sights the eyeless things had seen! Awful to us who regard with horror the eating of human flesh: but infinitely worse are we who murder by the millions.

I had great esteem for these men who parted with their belongings—things that ordinarily could not be bought; for I am convinced that no tobacco nor trade objects could have purchased them. Elsewhere I had striven to purchase skulls at fanciful prices, and had failed. Henceforth each rack

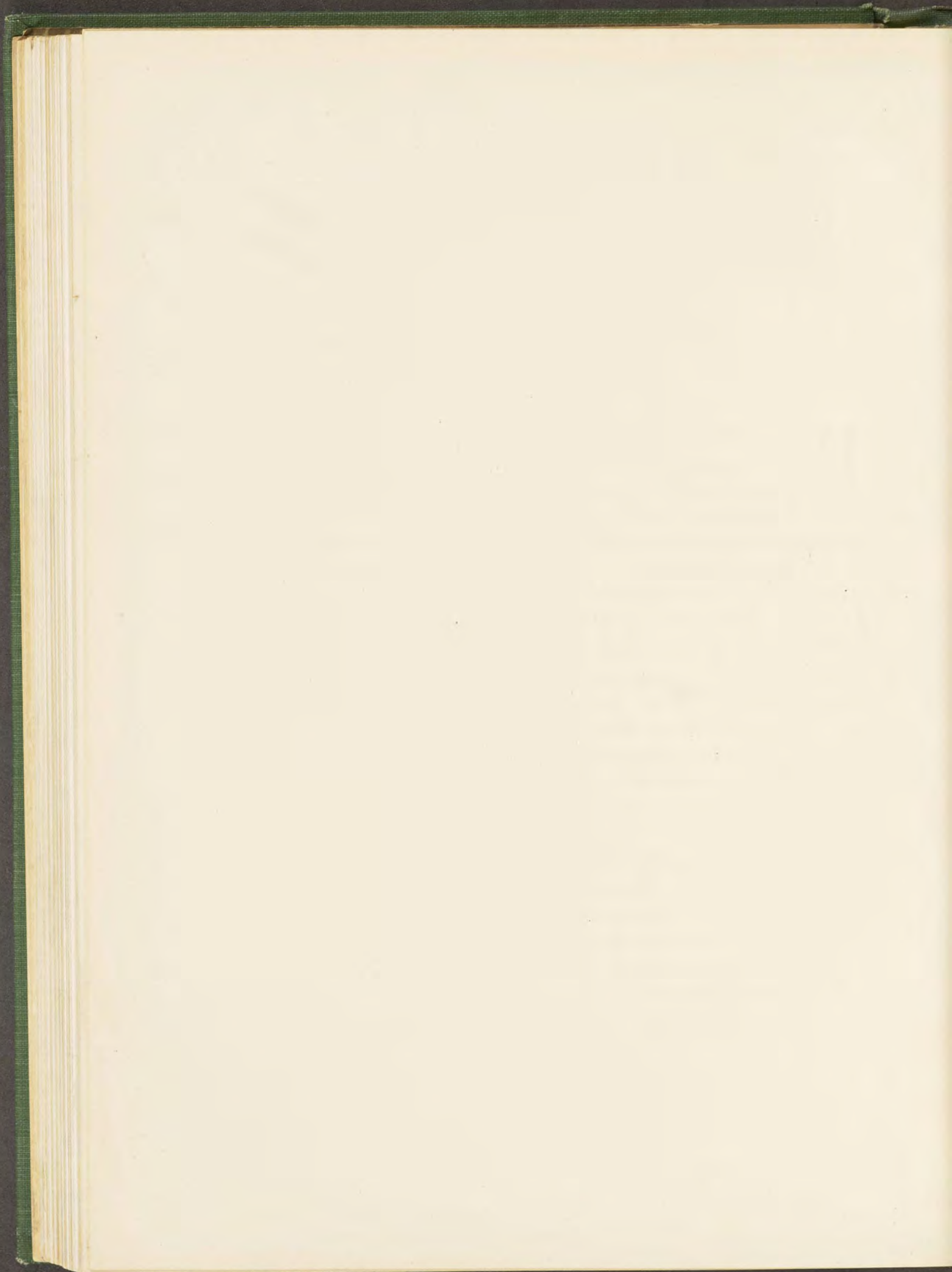
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will have a vacant hole. Perhaps it will remind them of the strangers who passed their way, but I am sure it will ever be a space of regret.

The little bundles were all brought and laid down on the floor of Gormier's cubicle. On each I placed a knife, twenty-two sticks of tobacco, six bidi-bidi and one armshell. I asked Gormier if the purchase money was satisfactory. He assented. Then the same question was asked of each. They all assented and the transaction—surely one of the strangest of trading incidents—was closed. Nor did the interest of the people wane here. They tore fibre from the Dubu decorations and helped to pack the skulls and tie up the Gope. I expressed a wish to have a rack made exactly similar as to that of Gormier's. The old men went away and late in the evening the rack was brought out complete in infinite detail, even to the crude little decorations of queer figures and totemic symbols. This is the first occasion that I have experienced such punctuality and contract-keeping by the natives.

Daybreak and a full tide enabled us to pass over the shallow bank by the village and take a shorter route by way of Port Romilly to the open sea. While it was still scarcely light our friends collected along the waterfront, and a kindly thought sent one of their canoes ahead to guide us through the intricate passage. I had many regrets on leaving these wild, untamed, kindly people, for they had helped us with alacrity and the payment which I gave them never caused a demur. As we turned into the daybreak stillness of a jungle waterway the last farewells died from my ears—"Ba-ma-huta! Ba-ma-huta!"

CHAPTER VIII
THE LATEST MONSTER VISITS HANAUABADA
AND HAS A MIXED RECEPTION



CHAPTER VIII

1

PORT MORESBY is the gateway to Papua and the headquarters of the Administration. It differs little from other townships of far North Australia excepting in degree of ugliness and discomfort. The architects of Port Moresby have modelled their designs after the fine old pioneer Australian corrugated iron school: and it is not surprising that under the swelter of the equatorial suns when the burnt-up hills focus their fire on to the "domestic ovens" of the city that the inhabitants tarry no longer than is necessary to accumulate or lose wealth and escape from this "Hobs of Hades." Still the "Port" has its redeeming features. The mosquitos are thoroughly healthy and one need not be excessively scared of contracting malaria from their multifarious bites. The officials are as numerous and as healthy as the mosquitoes and will be found just as active. The census informs one that the town is the healthiest in Australasia; nevertheless the consensus is of different opinion.

To compensate for the lack of attraction and interest in the town itself, it is only necessary to take a stroll along the harbour front to the native villages of Hanauabada, Tanobada, and Elevala. The huts of the former are built in a long terrace row, partly along the foreshores and mainly on a forest of saplings out over the sea. A very rickety bridgeway,

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which passes between an avenue of aquatic dwellings, keeps your eyes glued to each footstep, lest you trip or fall through a hole into the uninviting waters below. An endless stream of the rising generation follows in the wake, and strange emotions are stirred as their united weight springs and creaks the frail structure.

It is a relief to step on to the small islet of Elevala village and look back across the grass-thatched town—the habitat of seventeen hundred natives. Most of the young men of the village sign on as “cookie boys” (general servants) or labourers, whilst many engage professionally as clerks, policemen, and loafers. The district is the Doulton of Papua, for here the craft of pottery manufacture is carried on extensively and with considerable art. The clay, which is dug near by, is moulded and burnt by the women into cooking pots, which comprise the principal articles employed in bartering with the tribes of the Delta Division.

When the south-east monsoon is nearing its close, the village *lakatois* are rigged and made ready for sea. Bearing a heavy burden of stone ware, cooking utensils and water-pots, the fleet sails westward with the favouring winds, and making the village of Kaimari on the Purari Delta, indulges in barter with the local native traders, chiefly for sago, which grows in great abundance amidst the swamps of the hinterland. The heavily freighted canoes await the change in the season, and with the north-west winds the mariners return home amidst great rejoicings and revelry.

2

It was from Port Moresby that we launched the expedition which ended at Lake Murray among the remote Sambio tribes who had never before seen a white man. Our sea-planes were the first machines ever seen in the Port and



ONE OF THE CEREMONIAL DANCES BEFORE THE DUBU AT URAMA. IN HONOUR OF THE PARTY'S VISIT, COIR ARRANGED A SPECIAL FESTIVAL AND DANCES AT WHICH THE WARRIORS APPEARED IN GALA ATTIRE. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE ORDERED INTO THE JUNGLE UNTIL THE FESTIVITIES WERE OVER. THE OCCASION PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO PHOTOGRAPH MANY CEREMONIES NEVER BEFORE RECORDED



THE LATEST MONSTER VISITS HANAUABADA

they marked a third epoch in the history of the ancient Hanauabada village. Three times in its existence, it had been startled from a primitive quiet by the wonders of the white men. . . . First there had been the arrival of great ships, thousands of times larger than the biggest native canoes—ships propelled by gigantic sails as big as the sails of all the native canoes sewn together in one piece. Secondly, when a monstrous ship of iron, bigger even than the winged sailing vessels, entered the harbour, throwing from tall chimneys showers of smoke and sparks. And now arrived a new contrivance which lived with equal ease in the air and in the water . . . a gigantic bird ushering in the era of aviation.

The planes arrived by steamer and were lowered from the deck into the water. As they slipped over the side, the natives gave throat to prolonged war whoops and smote the sides of their canoes with their paddles producing a deep noted "boom." They were there in force, having marshalled the entire fleet, war and domestic, of Hanauabada, and as the seaplanes were towed toward the shore they followed, circling round and round, manifestly filled with wonder and doubt. It was an amazing spectacle—the native canoes side by side with the supreme inventive achievement of man, the aeroplanes moving at the head of a procession which contrasted the most primitive and the most modern methods of progression.

The test flights of the "Seagull" were livened with much Gilbertian humour. Each day crowds of natives foregathered, watching Lang and Hill assemble the machines. They noted the ponderous weight of the engines and discussed the inability of the "Seagull" to flap its wings. "Coi, Coi!" The white man makes "Coi Coi!" (gammon).

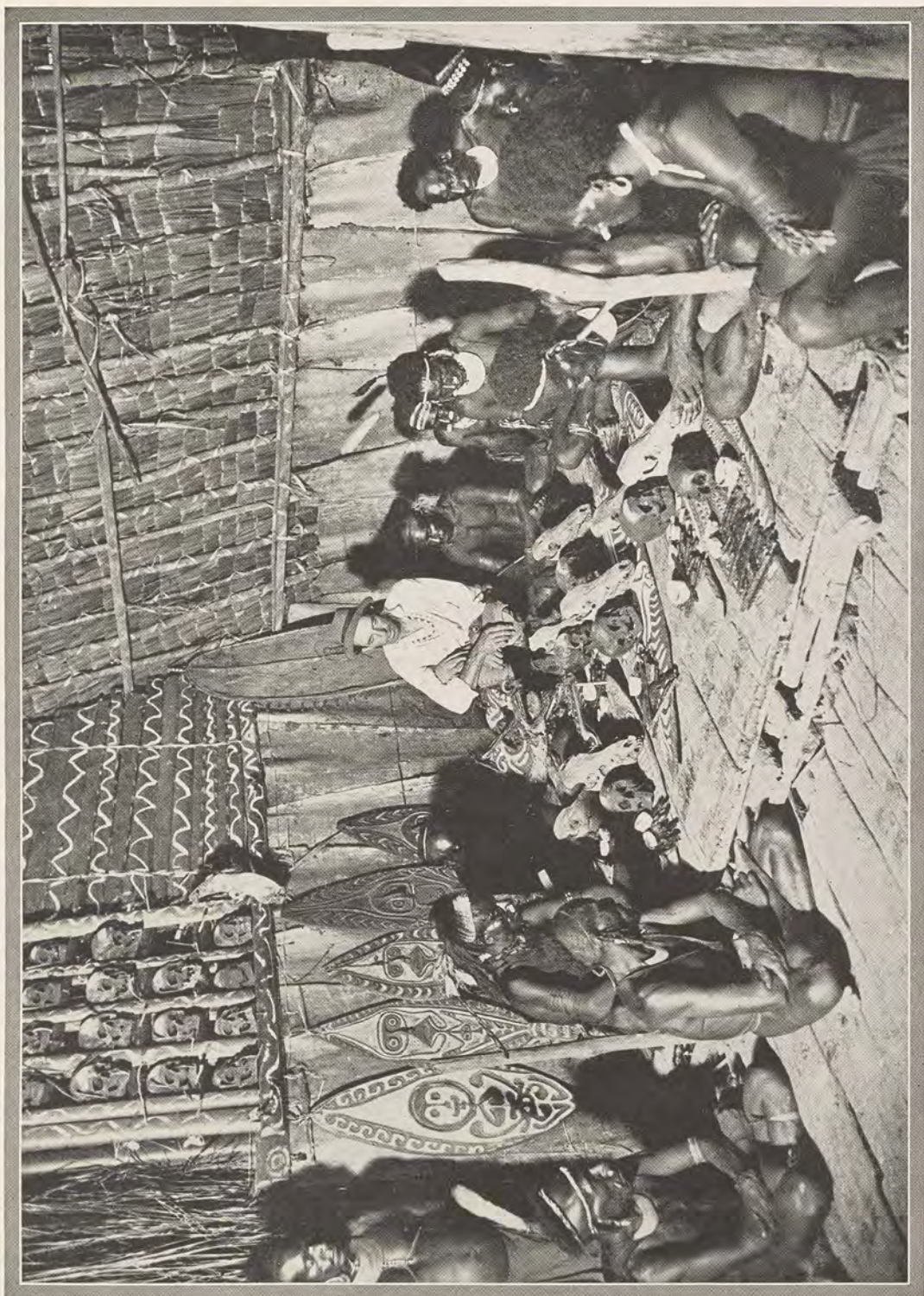
The testing of the engine, its deep throated roar, and propeller shimmering a transparent halo, sweeping the sea

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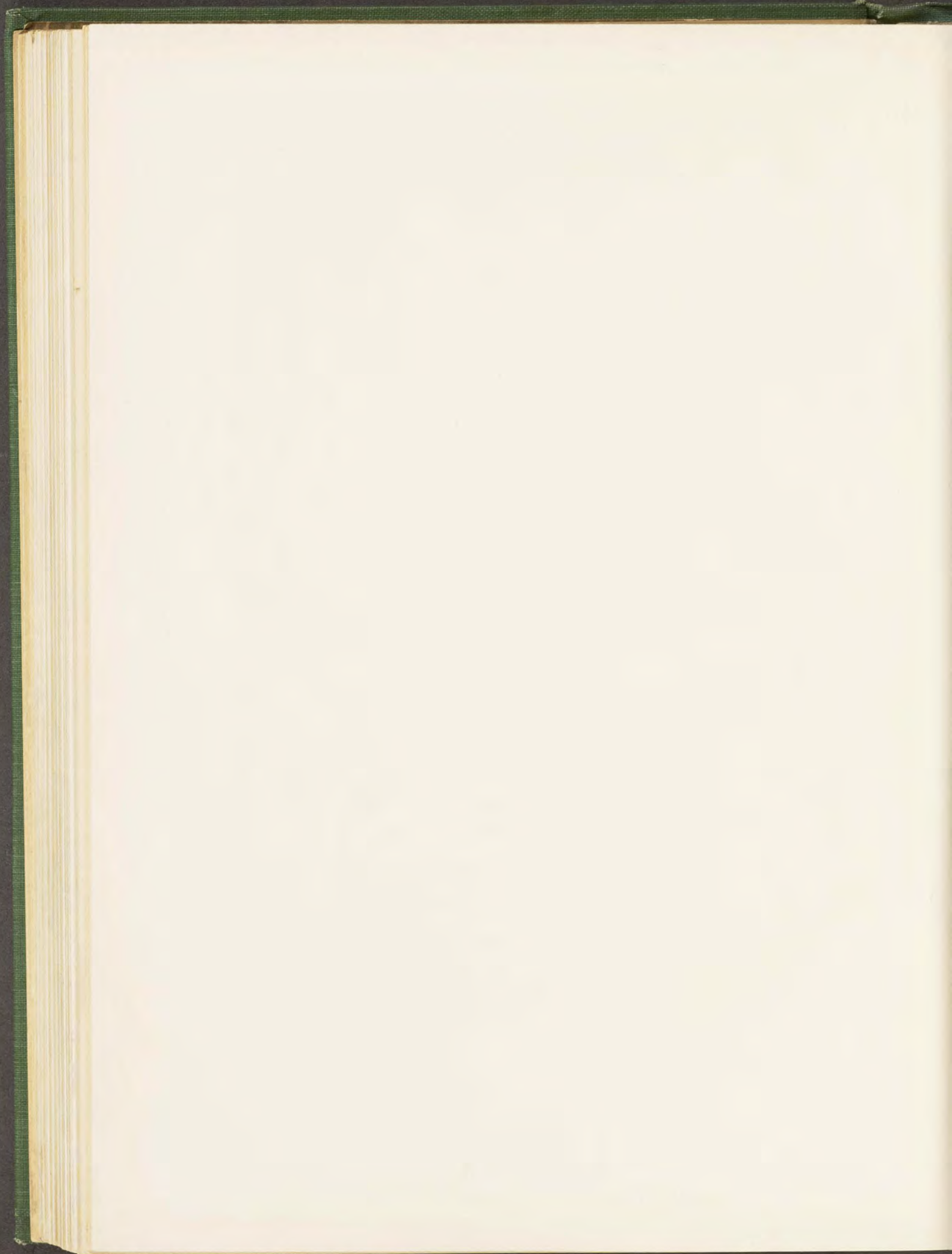
with its slip-stream in whirlwind sprays, scared them. Lang and Hill, be-goggled and helmeted, certainly looked formidable puripuri men, but the natives were very sceptical about their capacity to make puripuri sufficiently powerful to raise the machine into the air. A motley crowd of grass-skirted women and fuzzy chevelured men, girt about the loins with gay lava-lavas, watched dubiously and curiously the "casting off." The machine taxied down breeze, and then about and into the eye of the wind. Lang opened the throttle, the engine roared its glad challenge to the skies. The "Seagull" speeded in triumph, and cleaving aside the sea in frisky exultation, like a graceful bird that skips the crests before taking wing, rose into the air. Not a word fell from the on-lookers. They seemed as if hypnotized by the preternatural, until, like a whirlwind blast that wrecks all within its path, the machine headed directly towards them.

Then there was a scamper! Yells of terror, and the song of the "Seagull" sounded over the town, and great was the commotion thereof. The native servants fled from the houses, the court was forcefully adjourned, as prisoners, plaintiffs and police rushed for the open—all except the austere judge who followed with commendable dignity. The prisoners bolted from the gaol, the frothing tankard was forgotten—such a happening had never occurred in Port Moresby before! All stood in the streets craning their necks to the skies. Wildest excitement prevailed; cheers went up, yells of gladness and enthusiasm. I am told that many of the more primitive completely lost their self-control, and snatching their lava-lavas from their waists, frantically waved them to the skies, oblivious to their pristine nudity. With blinking eyes I observed that many a grass skirt took the place of a handkerchief!

Captain Lang circled the town, and then, satisfied with the



THE AUTHOR SURROUNDED BY THE TROPHIES WHICH COIR SECURED FOR HIM TO PLACE IN THE GREAT DUBU OF THE WHITE MAN "WHERE PEOPLE WOULD COME EVERY DAY TO LOOK AT THEM AND TO LEARN HOW THEIR FRIENDS AT URAMA LIVED."



THE LATEST MONSTER VISITS HANAUABADA

test, glided to the sea with the elegant grace of a seagull. No more enthusiastic nor jubilant crowd ever greeted aviators, as Lang and Hill taxied triumphantly up to the moorings and came to a rest.

Work for the day was suspended and gossip took its place. So the first flight in Papua was made amidst much rejoicing, though not without irony. On returning home I discovered the house boy "scooted" and the benzine iron going full blast in the middle of my best Sunday trousers! Sunday, thereafter, I was forced to observe as a day of rest to be spent in bed. Later the delinquent appeared, and bowing low with profuse excuses, penitently offered me his wife's best Sunday grass skirt!

3

Lang was regarded as either a god or a devil, and the seaplane became an object of awe and reverence.

All work in the community had to be abandoned for days, because the natives would not return, but insisted upon spending their time discussing the extraordinary machine and the success of the undertaking.

Later, McCulloch and I visited the native village. The inhabitants remembered me at once and would talk of nothing but the flying machine. But not one evinced any desire to make a flight.

"Canoe stop-along water, more safe," they said, grinning from ear to ear. "He very slow, but we get there by-and-by, all the same."

A few days later we moved the two planes over to Elevala, where we anchored them well under the verandahs of the stilted houses. Crowds came from the dwellings to examine them at close range. The popular village toy at once became the airplane; and I must say that in the making of such toys

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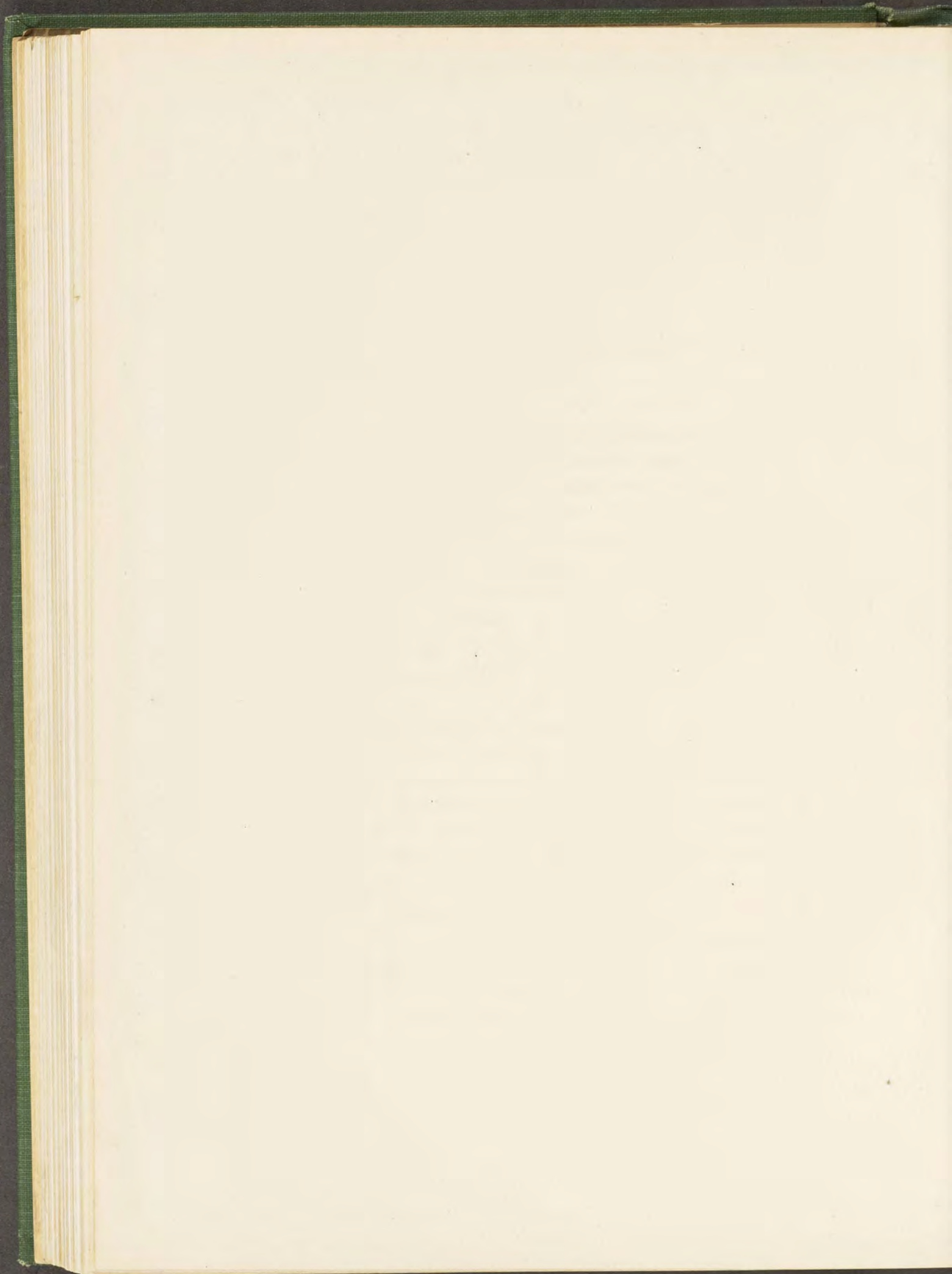
the native children displayed far more ingenuity than the white. The airplane toys made by the young boys were remarkably neat and accurate in every detail. The propellers were made by cleverly twisting a strand of palm leaf, and in the wind these rotated at an exciting speed.

Until the end of our visit the planes remained objects of overpowering interest to the natives. Fleets of canoes, in gala array all trimmed with fringes of frayed palm, circled about them. And the excitement seldom relaxed. Each flight was the cause for a new outbreak of wonder and talk. (The coast Papuan would rather talk than eat or sleep. Many a night, my weary body has been kept awake by the irrepressible chatter of my carriers, who broke out again and again into talk far into the night.) Only the very small children seemed unaffected by the excitement. On the day of our final flight I came suddenly upon the spectacle of a very old woman carrying a very small child. At the sight of the soaring machine, the child stared in silent wonder, but the old woman, overcome by her emotions, wept bitterly!

CHAPTER IX

KAIMARI, A VILLAGE OUT OF THE PREHISTORIC WORLD

STRANGE RITES AND STRANGER IMAGES



CHAPTER IX

1

KAIMARI is quite unlike any other place I have seen. The world seems a long, long way off, and we feel as though we have passed beyond the portals of another planet, which have closed behind, isolating us. Kaimari is one of the largest of the Purari Delta villages, and its population of some fifteen hundred is as queer as the strange environment. Looking down one thousand feet from the seaplane the village appears more like a floating collection of thatched houseboats than anything else; but this is when the tide is high. At low water, or rather high mud, Kaimari is a place of oozy desolation.

For fifty miles around, the landscape is a dismal mangrove swamp intersected by countless waterways, with never a rise nor square foot of dry land. Kaimari extends along one bank of the Kaimari River, and is proud in having three suburbs, Api, Kau, and Kaumai. Architecture is, to say the least, original—original as it originally was in the beginning. Each bungalow is detached, and whether that of chief or plebeian, the only difference lies in the number of wives that squat within the porchway.

The home is built on a large number of piles, some four feet above the mud, and upon this foundation rough-hewn planks are placed for a floor. The walls and roof take some-

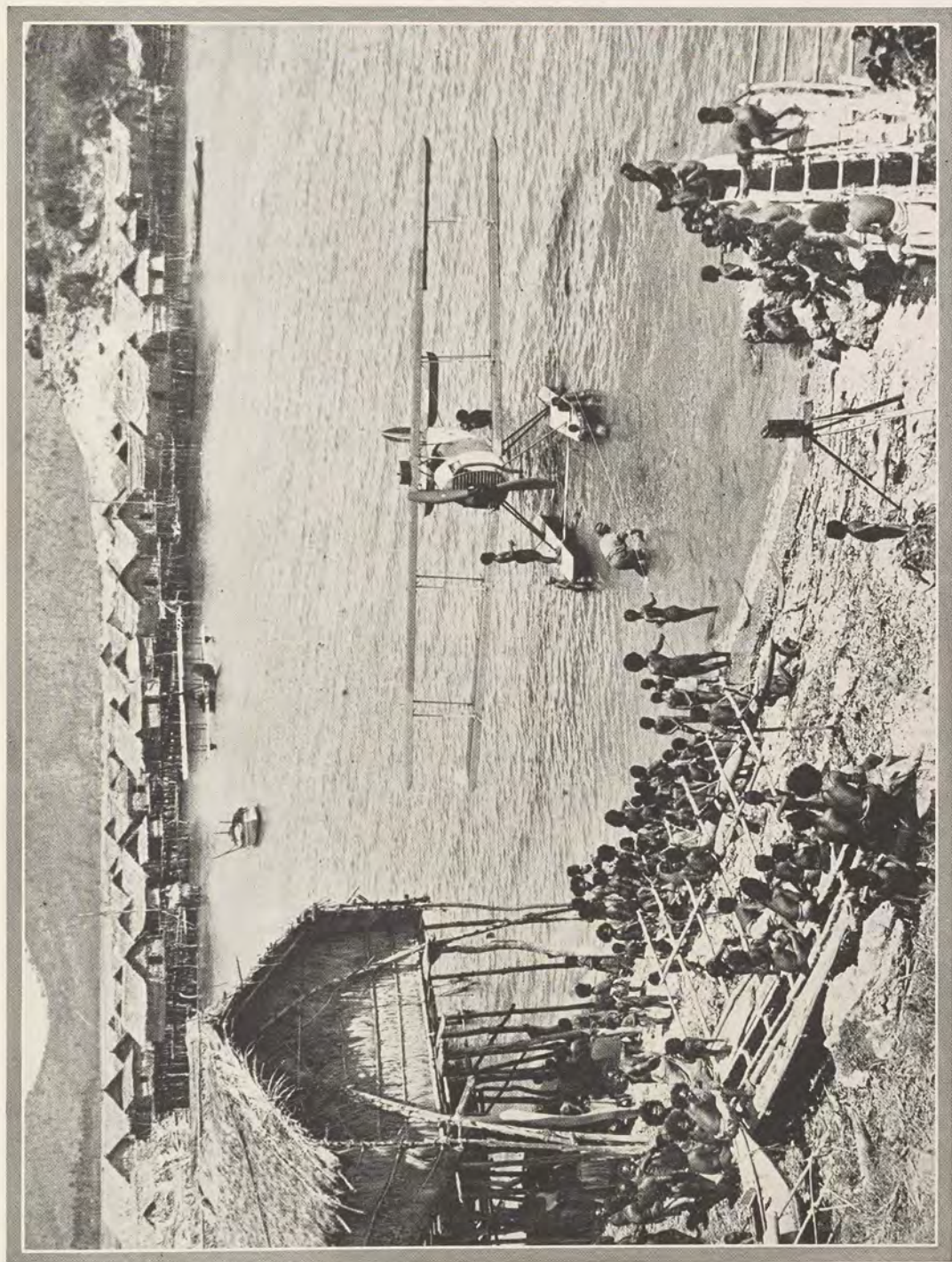
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what the form of a Gothic arch, much higher in the front than at the rear. The roof projects in a long snout, which conveys the impression that the design was inspired from a yawning crocodile, which the huts resemble in shape. Each is thatched with the leaf of the sago palm, and encloses as snug a little cot as the breadth of Papua boasts. A partition divides the interior into the eating and sleeping compartments, two indulgences of life most lustily carried out.

The furnishings are of the simplest. The bed, a sleeping mat of Pandanus leaf and several small logs for pillows. The living room contains the stove, a slab of clay where smouldering embers and viands offer up their fumes to filter out through the roof. The cooking utensils are a few clay pots, brought by the *lakatois* of Hanauabada and traded in exchange for sago once a year. In a corner is carefully stacked the fishing net and garden produce. On the wall sundry bows and a collection of arrows and those indispensable accessories of every Papuan, the dancing drum, the characteristic bau-bau (smoking pipe) and the little bag containing the lime gourd betel nut, and sundry odds and ends.

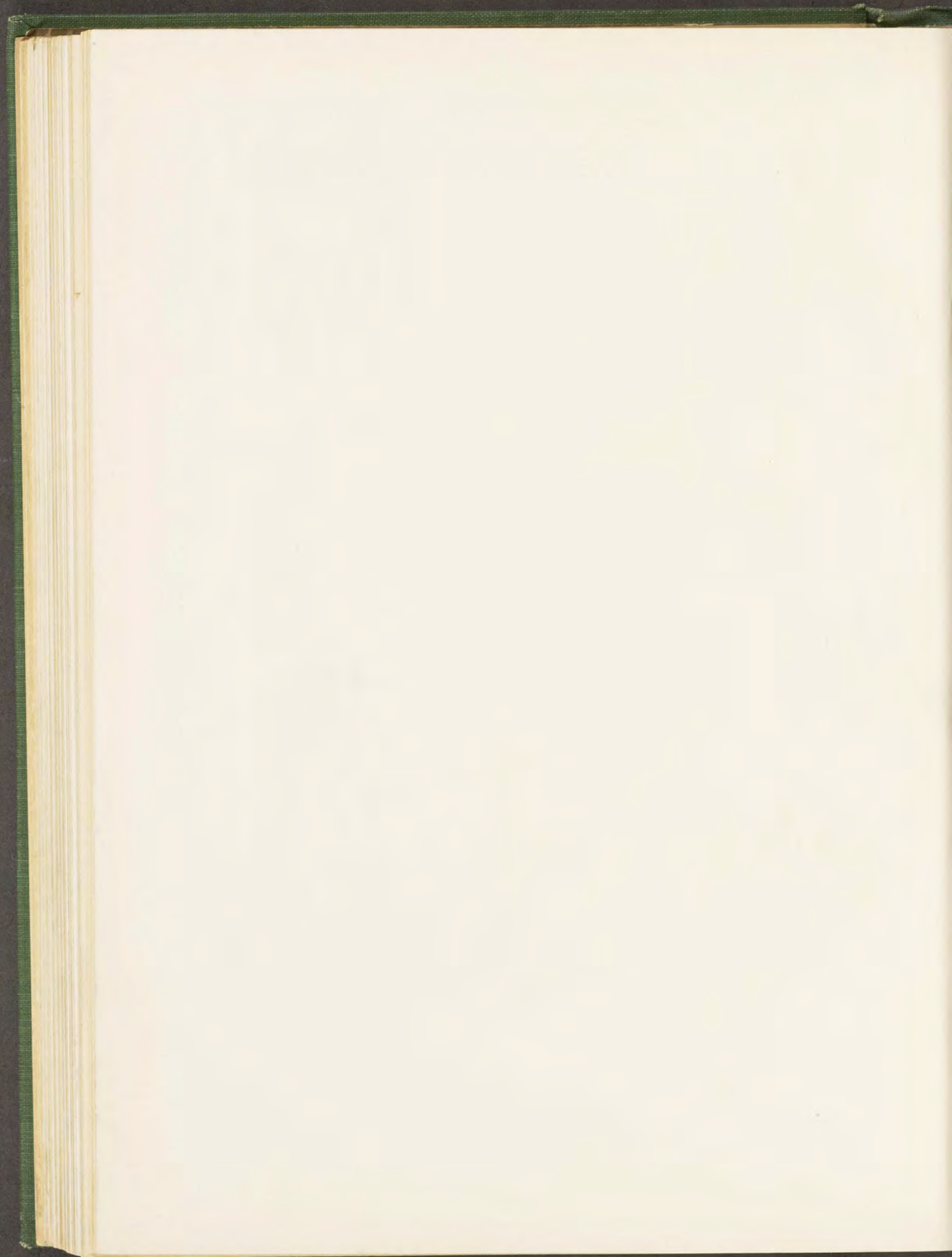
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Kaimari is midway between Port Moresby and the Fly River Delta from where we planned our entrance into the swampy and unexplored interior. We came—Lang and I—by seaplane from the Port along the coast, passing over villages whence the inhabitants had vanished into the jungle at the approach of the great flying demon that swept through the low hanging clouds. The trip was exceedingly unpleasant and perilous. Our course followed the reef-strewn coasts to the great mud delta of the five-mouthed Purari River, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. During the entire journey we were harassed by rain, low thick clouds and heavy mists.



THE LATEST MIRACLE OF THE WONDER-WORKING WHITE MAN ARRIVES IN ELEVALA. FOR DAYS FOLLOWING THE ARRIVAL OF THE "SEAGULL," ALL WORK WAS SUSPENDED WHILE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY GATHERED TO DISCUSS THE "CANOE THAT FLEW LIKE A BIRD."

WITHIN A DAY OR TWO, EVERY NATIVE BOY POSSESSED A MODEL OF THE SEAPLANE CONSTRUCTED WITH ASTOUNDING SKILL FROM LIGHT COTTONWOOD



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In this part of the coast, the climate is that of a prehistoric world in which the land appears to be still in the process of emerging from a vast ocean. Where land ends and water begins, it is almost impossible to say. It rains constantly and in the rare moments when it is not raining the air is filled with a thick mist. The river itself seems one of liquid mud. At its mouth, the sea rushing in meets the outflowing current and raises a tempestuous sea in which there seems to be as much mud as there is water. The entire delta is a vast swamp. Portions of it appear only when the receding tide reveals mud flats on which the natives perch precarious dwellings. The vegetation is thick and heavy, and the tangle of mangroves eternally drips moisture.

Nearing the great delta of the Purari River we encountered dense clouds which shut out all prospect of the land. Heavy rain fell, pelting and cutting our faces like hail as we progressed. The machine was tossed about wildly and, added to the extreme gloom, was the knowledge that we had to find a small village on an unknown river, with our fuel supply fast running out. Providentially the rain clouds cleared, and the visibility improved, so that we were able to locate the five great mouths of the Purari which presented a wild and grand spectacle. The seas were breaking on the various bars and great volumes of muddy water streamed out into the ocean beyond the reach of the eye. The foreshores were littered with logs and timbers swept down by the river and stranded. In the background the river itself could be traced winding a serpentine path among mangroves and swamps and nipa palms until lost in the obscurity of the interior. From our vantage point high in the cockpit of a soaring plane, the delta seacoast appeared as one great mud flat stirred into agitated motion by the rushing in of the mighty sea and tufted here and there with lush growths of prehistoric foliage.

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Above the Baroi mouth, I descried through my binoculars the top of a Dubu and accordingly the machine was headed in that direction until the familiar shape of our boat, the *Eureka*, hove into sight and we located Kaimari. From the air, Kaimari and its suburbs appeared to rise out of the oozing mud and water, its isolated parts connected by rude bridgeways. A desolate, gloomy place, yet incredibly fascinating.

We swept lower and lower, receiving many bumps, until we came over the waterway in front of the village. Here Lang made a beautiful landing just beside the *Eureka*, terrifying canoe-loads of natives who paddled frantically from our path. The *Eureka* had arrived a few hours previously and the news of our coming had already been circulated through the village and the people told not to be frightened.

As we slowly taxied up to the vessel, forty large canoes, filled with warriors, put off from the shore and began excitedly circling the "Seagull," beating the canoe sides with their paddles until the noise sounded like the rumbling of thunder. It was a wild barbaric greeting that welcomed us back to the remote dark ages. The warriors were completely fearless and it was with great difficulty that we kept them from ramming the seaplane and being cut to pieces by the propeller. To our bewilderment, Lang and I were obviously regarded as supernatural beings and the machine became an object of veneration and awe.

My coxswain translated the gist of the universal gossip as the canoes crowded around the *Eureka* to see us go aboard, the essence of which was that Lang and I must be "Two fella God belonga Missionary!"

Shortly after our arrival, the chiefs of Kau, Api, and Kaumai, the suburbs of Kaimari, made their official call, and a very loud noise they made about it. The old gents were



A BEAUTY OF HANAUABADA. THE FLOWERS IN HER HAIR ARE THE BRILLIANT FRANGI-PANI WHICH GROW IN PROFUSION THROUGHOUT NEW GUINEA. THE BEADS ARE MADE OF BRIGHT COLOURED SEEDS AND THE CRESCENT-SHAPED ORNAMENT, ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE AND PRIZED OF DECORATIONS, IS CUT FROM THE OYSTER-SHELL WHICH IS THE WORLD'S PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF MOTHER-OF-PEARL



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heavily encumbered about their necks with dogs' teeth and shells, which indeed were the sole garments they wore. In their wake followed a fleet of canoes laden to the gunwales with enthusiastic and strong-smelling warriors.

They came on behalf of the village people to make a peace offering of a pig to the "Canoe belonga two fella God" as my interpreter translated it.

As it was to our interest to retain our prestige as long as possible, the sacred pig was accepted with becoming dignity and presents, and amid great ceremony, the sacrifice was brought out toward sunset and placed reverently on the altar-like bow of the seaplane.

Long into the night the villagers loitered by the river front of their Augean city, gazing at their canoes and comparing them with this supreme product of civilization. So also did I stand on the deck and meditate over the primitive craft and the "Seagull," and it seemed difficult to realize that the æons of ages had evolved this graceful ship of the skies from these simple logs of the first age. During the night I sent Dogai and Dogodo out in the dinghy to bring the pig aboard. In the morning the village emissaries came out to look for the pig, and when they found it gone great was their rejoicing and great was the rejoicing of our native crew, for indeed the flying machine had flown to even greater heights in the estimation of the latter, since it brought them pig. I subsequently learned that the villagers believed that the "Seagull" was a flying demon, and now that it had accepted their offering, its spirit was appeased and no harm would come to them!

The night of our arrival we slept in a native-built rest-house ashore. The *Eureka* floated a few hundred yards away, her electric lights ablaze. McCulloch had just finished speaking to Thursday Island by wireless. The seaplane swung at her moorings nearby, and around us rose the shadows of a

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prehistoric village, its great Dubus and Ravis silhouetted against the moon. It was the realization of a tale by Jules Verne.

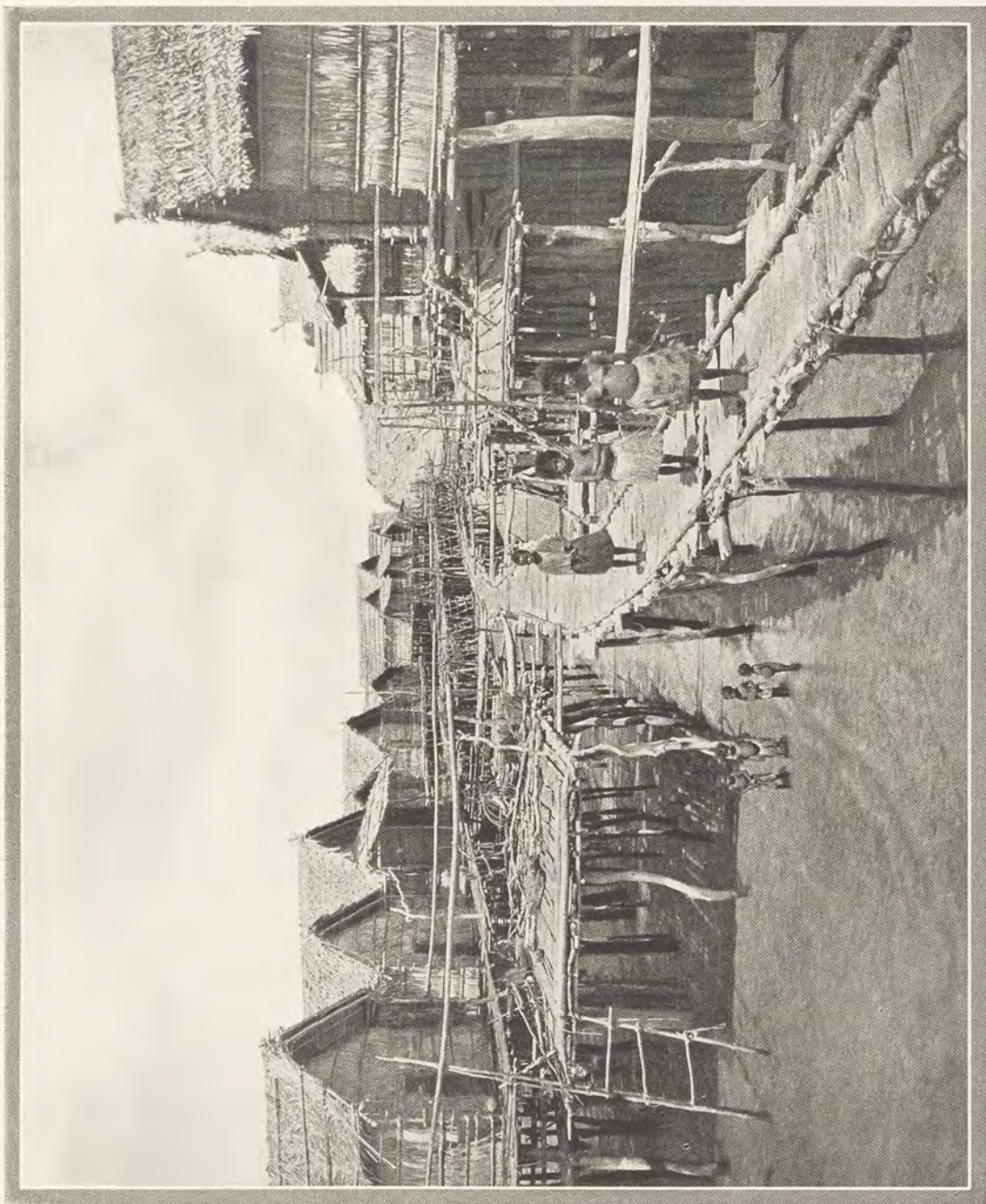
3

The Styx Promenade, as I have named the main thoroughfare of Kaimari, is a raised roadway of mangrove sticks that runs the length of the village and spans creeks and slime in rickety rottenness. From it, pathways ramify to the domiciles, and so the inhabitants are able to move about without sinking thigh-deep in filth. The *Eureka* and "Seagull" are moored close inshore at the southern end of the village, and a large crowd of males of all ages, collect there from dawn till dark to gossip over the strange craft that came to them through the skies. A low fence extends around the waterfront which keeps the crocodiles without and the pigs within—sometimes.

On the mud flat before the fence lie stranded large numbers of the characteristic Purari canoes. These strange craft are simply excavated logs varying in length up to forty-five feet. Eccentric features in design are noticeable in the bow and stern. The former is cut so low that when heavily laden a small boy squats there, and is caulked in with mud. Little "stick-in-the-mud" keeps out the bow wave, whilst a narrow barrier of mud seals off the wake astern. That indispensable tenacious slime—mud!

Kaimari mud has a thousand uses. It is the playground where the pigs and children revel and wallow. It is the field where the staple foods, crabs and sago, thrive. In fact the whole place is an odoriferous quagmire, from which the populace seem moulded. I have no doubt that the quality of this mud is responsible for the reek of the people.

After this digression, more about canoes and canoeing. A canoe may be navigated either by one old woman, who sits in



THE BOARDWALK OF ELEVALA VILLAGE, FROM WHICH THE SEAPLANE MADE ITS START FOR THE INTERIOR



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the stern and with a large flat paddle directs the barque as it drifts with the current, or by a dozen stalwart young warriors with swelling muscles and rhythmic swing that stem their craft defiantly against the press of tide or stream. Admirable is their dexterity and superb their poise and balance. Move ever so little to one side of a Purari canoe, and unless she happens to be a pretentious vessel, over she goes! As the only means of moving from place to place is by canoe the youngest children are as adroit afloat as they are nimble in balancing and hopping about the treacherous saplings of the Styx Promenade.

McCulloch and myself will guide my readers through a tour of this city. Step lightly along the Styx way, in single file extended. The sticks are decayed, and six feet below awaits the slimy pit. McCulloch is a great "hit" in the village; his extra short cuts display an ivory lankiness that is the admiration of the fair dusky ones. On either side the bungalows face the road, and gossip and giggles greet us.

But Lang and myself have our share of triumphs. Lang has a plate of false teeth which, by clever manipulation, he causes to disappear and reappear to the astonishment of the natives who stand about him in a circle shouting with mirth. As for me, since childhood I have been able to move my scalp and wriggle my ears. This extraordinary accomplishment has been no less successful in collecting a crowd. They surround us on all sides—men, women and children—delighted with their strange white visitors.

As regards looks, the Kaimari ladies are the most un-beautiful creatures I have seen. Their dress, microscopically speaking, is customary rather than effective. The hair is shorn close, leaving a narrow ridge down the centre, and two rings above the ears resemble tufts of astrakan. Fashions in coiffure are variable, and the design might riot to a knob

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fore and aft, or a ridge athwart the cranium. In others the hair covers the scalp in small sprouts as if sown. Eyes are unusually goo-goo (probably on account of the eyebrows having been plucked out), and as scandalous as the broad nose with its pierced septum and six-inch nasal decoration. Lips thick and framing a mighty red orifice displaying two rows of black teeth—discoloured by the habitual chewing of betel nut and lime. No, my lady, you are an ugly gargoy! Methinks the Potter's hand must have shaken badly, or perhaps it is the Kaimari mud from which He moulded you.

A few straggling coconuts struggle for existence in the less submerged mud areas, but nothing else does well about the village but mangroves, death and decay. Hunched up by her doorway sits an old woman plastered in mud from head to toe. Her shrivelled body is encumbered with skeins and cables of native cords. Her limbs are bound with ligatures until the flesh stands out. She mourns her husband and does penance for his death.

On another verandah squats a group of garrulous freaks—females that resemble moving mud casts. They are all in mourning, someone or something died. Perhaps a distant relative or a dog. These people are never so happy as when they appear miserably sad. Their life appears to have absorbed the inexpressible gloom that permeates even the weeping skies; for rain it does, and each evening as darkness falls the lightning plays and the thunder growls about these hapless people of gloom and storm.

As we advance there gathers behind a trail of boys and men. They follow to a colossal building whither the Styx path leads and ends. Across the imposing entrance stretches a barrier of woven palm leaf, with a flap obscuring the door. We tarry to regard in awe the majesty of the great arch that culminates seventy feet above us. It seems as if the warning,

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"All hope abandon ye who enter here," is inscribed on the portals. We will lift the screen and go in.

4

We stood on the threshold of a great hall that extended like a vast cavern to a remote gloom. On the floor some forty or fifty sleeping forms snored their afternoon siesta. From roof and walls pended an amazing collection of fantastic masks in various stages of construction.

The hubbub behind us awakened the sleepers, who viewed us with resentment until a few sticks of trade tobacco induced them to cheerfulness. A particularly repulsive old gentleman, much decorated with dog's teeth and evidently the chief, assigned himself to showing us around, which he did with great ostentation and jabber. A crowd of men followed us through the Ravi, for such is the name of these great Purari club-houses, sullenly looking on as we noted and examined everything.

For three hundred feet we walked along an aisle, with the heavy constructional poles on either side. These poles, as well as supporting the roof, marked the limits of *lavara* or cubicles which contained numbers of remarkably carved plaques, probably representing ancestral spirits. Beneath these "Kwoi" plaques were heaps of crocodile, pig and occasional human skulls, doubtless heirlooms and trophies. We then came to a partition that barred further progress. At the last *lavara* before this barrier, the followers halted and only the chief and we two white men proceeded.

Squeezing through a narrow opening we were blinded for the moment by the darkness, but obviously we had scared great numbers of bats and vermin. As our eyes penetrated the gloom we discovered that we were in an apartment some fifty feet in length by fifteen in width: the roof had tapered

Father and son were residents of the village of Elevala and were experienced mariners, although they had no faith in compass or chart. In this photograph the son is wearing a headdress carrying a small fortune in paradise plumes, his patrimony and the inheritance of many generations. On the farewell of Vaieki, the father, to the Hurley party, the old gentleman presented the headdress to the author as a souvenir of his friendship and faith. It now reposes in all its glory in the Australian museum, to the envy of more than one woman visitor.



VAIEKI JR., SON OF VAIEKI, THE COXSWAIN WHO PILOTED THE *Eureka* IN ITS PERILOUS WANDERINGS AMONG THE REEFS AND SHIFTING MUDFLATS OF THE STORM HARASSED DELTA COUNTRY



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from the entrance, and was now only ten feet high. Grouped closely together were seventeen wild and eerie effigies, the sacred and dread Kopiravi. These grotesque objects were reminiscent caricatures of crocodiles yawning heartily. They stood on four legs of cassowary design and had an opening in the belly so that a man might stand erect therein and carry them about. Until recently the mangled bodies of victims were thrust into the gaping jaws of these implacable gods as offerings; in the morning the bodies were removed and cut up for the ghoulish feast. Beneath each was placed a carefully sealed package, which made us exceedingly curious.

McCulloch was very anxious to procure one of those packages for the museum, and I had made up my mind to secure photographic records of this den at all costs. On emerging from the chamber of horrors, the old chief truculently demanded Ku-Ku (tobacco) and intimated that unless we gave and appeased the wrath of the Kopiravi a serious calamity or sickness would befall us; so we gave. Attractive overtures to purchase and for permission to photograph availed us not, so I spoke to my native coxswain Vaieki of our desires, and that wily rascal formulated a plan. The old men are an astute lot of impostors and hypocrites, and I suspected that the motive of the Kopiravi is to terrorize the young men, women and children so that they might be worked to gratify the desires of these old drones, in order that the choicest of foodstuffs might be offered to the Kopiravi and fall to their lot.

So Vaieki waylaid the old men of the Ravi, and it was suggested by them that a package might disappear in the night, if a large knife took its place. This was done, but it so happened that the contents of the mystic packet belonged to twenty various people; and, on the very brink of achievement, the owners learned of the dark deed, the package was rescued,

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and after much altercation was returned to the Ravi. After much watching and waiting an opportunity arrived at last. Death called the villagers to a house of mourning to cry their grief, so we found the Ravi deserted and unguarded.

Without hesitation we made our way to the Holy of Holies and demolished and re-erected the barrier so that I might have room to operate. Numerous flashlights which nearly set fire to the Ravi enabled several exposures to be made. We even went so far as to desecrate the sanctity by removing the Kopiravi and arranging them to our satisfaction and advantage.

McCulloch, with trembling fingers, opened one of the mysterious packages and found it to contain twenty "bull-roarers" of diverse shapes and sizes. These were thin tapering pieces of wood varying from eight to sixteen inches in length, and with a small loop at one end to attach a cord. When whirled around the head a gruff sound is produced, varying in pitch according to the size of the "bullroarer." This blood-curdling noise is the voice of the Kopiravi which strikes consternation and terror throughout the village.

5

Scarcely had we finished when the savages began to file into the Ravi, but so far we were unseen. When all were seated and drowsy I arranged a diversion so that we might escape unnoticed. I gave to McCulloch a packet of fire-crackers, and he quietly left our hiding and mingled with the natives, gaining at once their attention and approbation by distributing a few sticks of "Trade." A yell from the sanctum (mine) caused the necessary diversion to allow McCulloch to light the crackers unseen. The ruse was successful beyond hopes. Bang-bang, helter skelter, shouts and shrieks and a confused rabble rushed the entrance and made a terrified exit.

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During the hubbub, Vaieki and I hurriedly replaced the barrier, and by the time the natives had composed themselves and returned we were seated complacently on our belongings, breaking up small presents of Ku-Ku. We again made overtures to purchase one of the bundles. Some were for it, but the majority were unwilling. However, as my friend McCulloch says, "No hide, no Christmas box"; so we prevailed by a great display of presents and bluff. The outcome was that we might extract one bullroarer from each packet in return for twenty sticks of tobacco and a bag of rice.

With the chief keeper of the Kopiravi, McCulloch entered the sanctum and began making his selection. No one ventured near the barrier. Nor would the high priest touch any of the packages. In the darkness McCulloch's job was unenviable, for as he opened each packet spiders, lizards, scorpions and centipedes crawled out. The impatience of the waiters was relieved by occasional Ku-Ku gifts.

At last the selection was made and wrapped up in palm leaf. None would venture near nor would they allow the parcel to leave the Ravi until it was rolled in numerous sleeping mats and McCulloch's singlet wound around the outside. As we passed along the Styx Promenade not a soul was to be seen in the village, for should any but the initiated old men gaze upon these things they would either die or else become violently ill. We were only saved from being stricken by the generous presents which we made to the old men of the Ravi.

The prestige of these old men is an interesting manifestation of the reverence for priests and the priest-cult which exists in some degree or other throughout the world and is invariably strong among primitive peoples who have a reverence for magic, medicine men, and *puripuri*, as the Papuans designate the supernatural. By the use of the mystic Kopiravi

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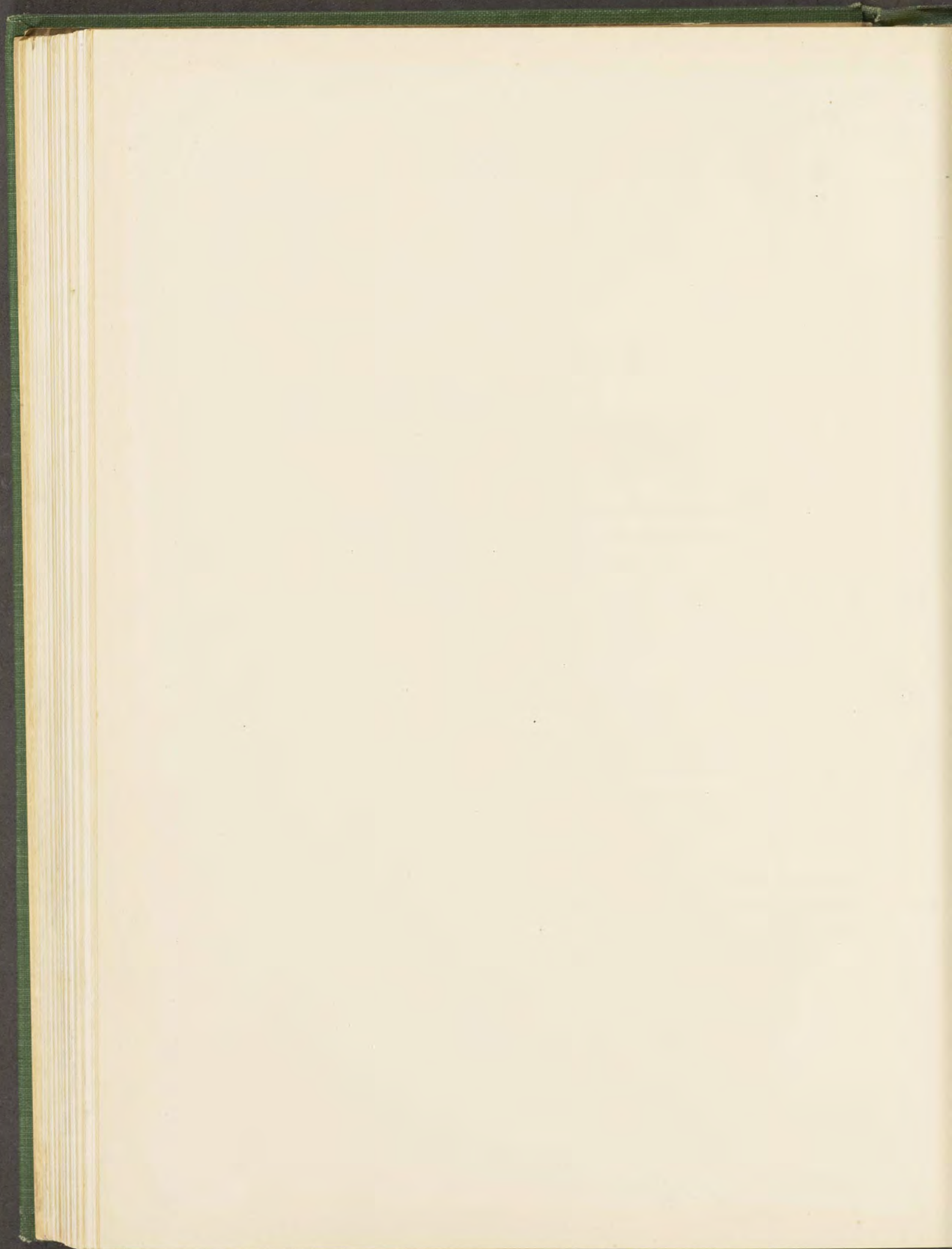
masks and by quantities of similar paraphernalia, the elders succeed in keeping the women, young men and children under complete control. If there occurs a shortage in the crop of coconuts, a tabu is placed upon the fruit. Word is given out by the dotards that to eat the coconut during a designated period will produce terrible illness and death. The result is that nothing could induce a woman, a child or a young man even to touch a coconut during this period; but the fruit disappears all the same. Someone eats it. The old men put the blame upon the spirits.

Likewise a young hunter, having shot a pig, is required to bring it as an offering to the spirits who inhabit the awful cell at the far end of the Ravi. Like the coconuts, the pig disappears. The spirits, it seems, have only a taste for those things which are considered delicacies by the inhabitants of these delta villages.

CHAPTER X

A FLIGHT THROUGH A WORLD OF MUD, CLOUD AND RAIN

FROM KAIMARI TO DARU IN A TROPIC STORM



CHAPTER X

I

FOR a month we laboured amid the gloomy Erebus of Kaimari finding the weight of our environment extremely depressing. Lang and Hill were kept busy on the machine, stilling the depreciation caused by the intermittent rains and sunshine. Nor was the weather at all suitable for flying or photography, and of the many survey flights which I made with Lang, for only a few hours was the visibility conducive to accurate observation or picture-taking.

Owing to the enormous evaporation taking place over the swamps and waterways and our proximity to the fringe of the south-east trade winds, the upper atmosphere is always turbulent and agitated, and Lang merits the highest praise for his skill and pilotage under these harassing and perilous conditions. The river lake by Kaimari from which we used to make our ascents was barely large enough for the "Seagull" to take off, and I know of no more exciting thrill than skimming along the winding surface of a river course, a few hundred feet wide at fifty miles an hour, slowly climbing up through the trees and then being bumped up and down by the eddy currents above their tops.

It was after such a hair-raising take-off that the half-caste engine-room boy asked Engineer Bell: "What become those two fella, s'pose flymachine he stop along trees?"

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Bell's answer: "Them two fella he altogether finish," perturbed the apprehensive and sympathetic youth deeply. He looked glum, and after due reflection replied: "My word, Taubada, s'pose them two fella die, who pay em money belonga boy?"

The next stage was the most hazardous of the expedition, the passage by air and water to Daru. The distance from Kaimari to Daru is one hundred and seventy miles of delta where the great rivers, Baroi, Kikori, Auro, Turama, Omati, Bamu, and the mighty Fly, pour their volumes into the sea through a thousand mouths. The sea is shoaled with mud-banks, and storm and rain clouds crowd the skies. The "Seagull" led the way on this stage, for in the event of a forced landing, there would then be a remote possibility of being picked up by the Eureka, which was to follow the flying course as near as was practicable.

With full petrol tanks a favourable daybreak was awaited; for it is advisable to finish flying before eleven o'clock, after which hour the atmosphere becomes highly disturbed. Our farewell to Kaimari was exceptionally dramatic. The whole population assembled by the waterfront to see us off, and as the "Seagull" taxied from her moorings, wild cries of "Keyamo! Keyamo!" (good-bye) sounded above the roar of the engine. The "Seagull" quickly gathered way, and soon we were skimming the river at fifty miles per hour; but the machine refused to leave the water. A light breeze was blowing from the opposite direction, so Lang turned about and made another attempt.

Again we swept past the village—fifty, fifty-five, sixty miles per hour; then the keel just lifted, but we were now at the end of the lake. The only exit was by a very tortuous creek two hundred feet wide, with tall walls of mangrove trees on either bank. Into this creek we burst like a whirl-

MUD, CLOUD AND RAIN

wind, racing a mad race with death at our wing-tips. The trees were a blur, and the roar of the engine was hurled back, reverberating through the jungle like a tornado. The birds took to wing, and several canoes paddled frantically to get out of our way. Slowly we climbed, but when Lang banked and the machine swept around the bends, we lost the gain again and the trees seemed to brush our wing-tips. We had now flown three miles and were just level with the mangrove tops. There was scarcely time to contemplate a vast plain of uniform treetops that stretched like an emerald sea to the featureless horizon, before we cleared the creek entrance and swept out over the broad, free expanse of Port Romilly.

The machine now began to climb rapidly, and with the expanding view of increasing altitude, we gained a magnificent outlook over the dreary expanses of the Kikori Delta. As far as eye reached, the only outstanding features were the Aird Hills, a remarkable group, rising some nine hundred feet from the swamps, and the distant Sambrigi ranges, fifty miles away. Waterways threaded these mangrove wastes in bewildering maze. It might have been a Martian landscape, with a complex system of irrigation canals ramifying its bleak plains. Below, siltbanks and bars littered the muddy sea, over which dun-coloured rollers tumbled.

Cape Blackwood is a long, narrow tongue of morass, with a mud beach on which lie stranded immense accumulations of dead trees and driftwood, over which the slimy seas were driving. The next stage across the Delta of the Turama saw little incident. We kept out over the sea, and the distant prospect of the shore, which I reviewed through the glasses, was of the same monotonous dreariness. I kept a strict check on the chart, plotting the course as we advanced, and marvelled at the accuracy of the Admiralty charts of this for-

On the edge of the constantly shifting rivers on unstable piles of accumulated silt, the village of Kaimari with its suburbs Kau, Apiand Kaumi precariously raised its houses on piles of mangrove wood. The three great houses with the yawning shouts of crocodile design are the great Ravis or clubhouses of the men, where no women or children are permitted to cross the threshold.

The entire delta is little more than a shifting sea of mud, enveloped in constant gloom, where the rain falls almost daily. There is virtually no solid land and the tropic sun beating upon the constant vapours produces a tepid heat that is almost unbearable. The whole is like the earth before the appearance of man, when the land and sea had not yet clearly separated themselves and the rain fell without cessation.



A GLIMPSE OF A PREHISTORIC WORLD. THIS PHOTOGRAPH, TAKEN DURING A FLIGHT OF THE *Seagull*, DEPICTS ADMIRABLY THE CHARACTER OF THE DELTA COUNTRY AND THE NATIVE VILLAGES. THE ILLUSTRATION SHOWS KAIMARI VILLAGE WITH ITS THREE GREAT RAVIS, API, KAU AND KAUMI



MUD, CLOUD AND RAIN

saken coast. Several islands had altered their shapes, and a few rivers their courses; occasional new villages and old ones gone, but much can alter in a few years where enormous rivers are energetically tearing down the land, and dumping immense quantities of silt at the point where their slimy currents meet the incoming tides.

The sky now grew densely overcast, and the prospect of the land was only fitfully visible through the scud. Occasionally we passed over extensive banks of low clouds, and the atmosphere became tumultuous. We were now crossing the estuary of the Fly, with its countless low flat islets and mangrove jungles, a region ill-famed for its treacherous weather and tides. Leaden clouds formed a gloomy ceiling; the floor was a sea of viscous mud rollers oozily tumbling over the bars. Scattered showers and squalls surrounded us, but Lang was able to manoeuvre the "Seagull" in order to evade them. All went well until we reached a point off the southern extremity of Kiwai, an attenuated ribbon of silt called an island, which lies midway across the Fly estuary and splits the furious tides. An ominous bank of towering cumuli was drifting in rapidly from the east with a deluge streaming from its under surface. Heavy rain and scud clouds obscured Kiwai, save the extreme southern point.

Could we make the narrow passage between these warring elements, or would we be compelled to land on the heaving sea of mud? It was a toss-up, and an inhospitable project in either case. During this perilous dash I could not help admiring the silver edged glory of the flocculent masses that menaced us. Strange, too, the ancient adage of the silver lining ran through my thoughts, and again proved itself a truism. We just cleared the passage between the storms, fully expecting the way to be barred by lightning which was flickering among the clouds in the vicinity. All we experienced

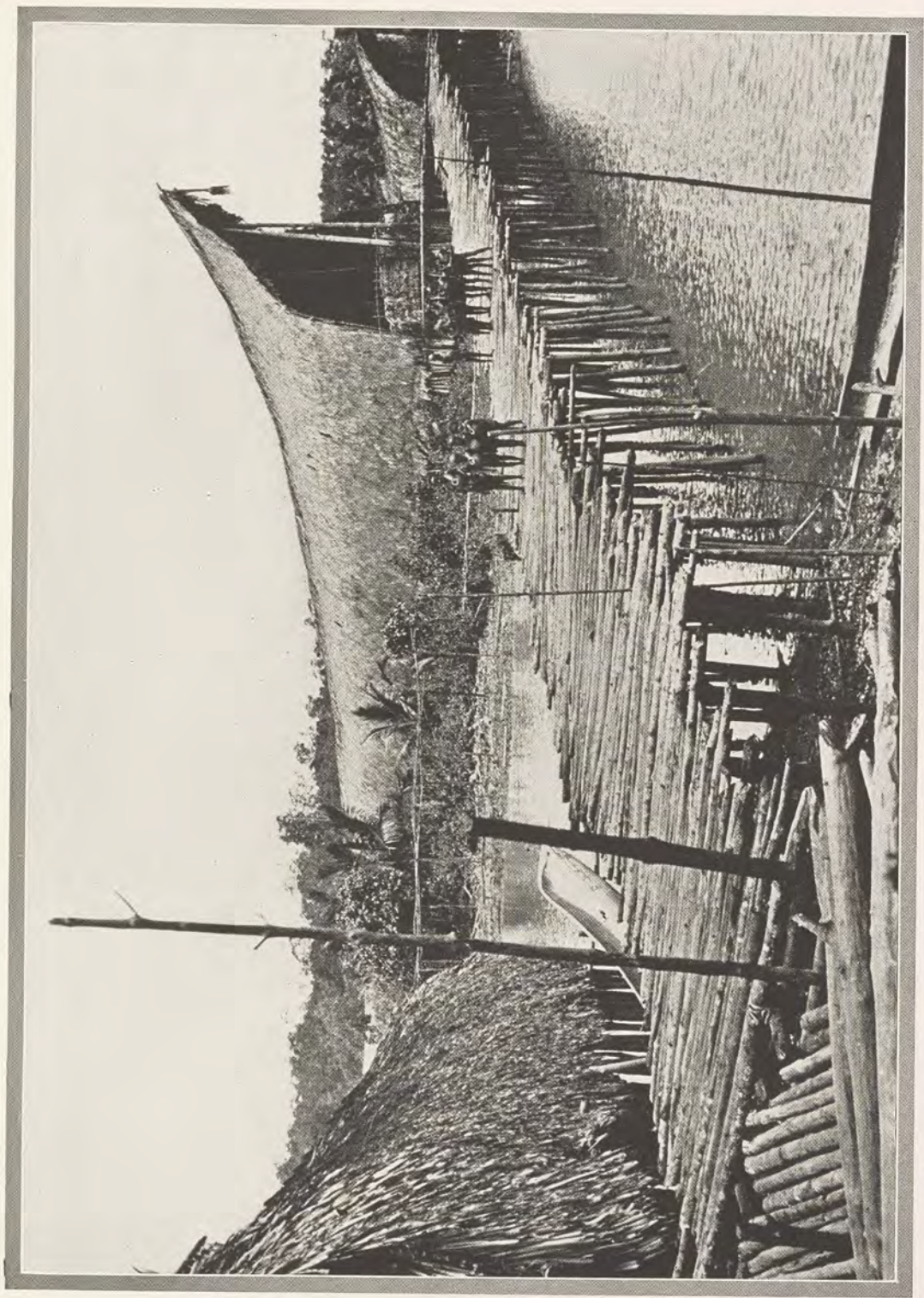
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was a violent tossing from the breath of the storm that puffed at us as we escaped from its clutches. Looking down on to the sea I observed the surface swept to brown crests and the mangrove trees bowed back by the squall—and was thankful.

Still the reaper chased behind through blinding rain and mist, and almost clutched our tail as we fled through the narrow Parama passage between Brampton Island and the mainland.

A stiff easterly squall blew on our beam, and the "Seagull" had to be "headed up" in order to maintain a southerly course. Half-way through the passage we flew into a severe disturbance. The "Seagull" rose, fell, and rocked so violently that it was a case of hold on and sit tight. I would much have preferred to have got out and got under; and only Lang's masterly pilotage is responsible for this narrative having been written. In half a minute we fell from fifteen hundred feet to three hundred feet, and still were falling rapidly. Then an upcurrent heaved us up three hundred feet, and the machine was almost overturned and began to slip sideways; but once more Lang brought her up to an even keel.

Things were becoming too exciting for high-strung nerves and low altitudes, and when it seemed that we must inevitably kill many crabs on the mudbanks, we righted and were through Hell's gates. An open sea expanded below us, and less turbulent airs harassed the flight to our goal which now resolved itself from out the mists. We made a broad sweep over Daru, and then descended bumpily on to the crest of the rollers, for a big sea was driving in. The "Seagull" was anchored on a mudflat in the lee of the pier on which the entire white population, numbering fully seven, gathered to welcome us. The warm hospitality of Mr. Oldham, the Government magistrate at this remote outpost brought us back to earthly realms of contentment, and we lived again.



THE SMALLER RAVIS OF API, A SUBURB OF KAIMARI, CONNECTED LIKE MANHATTAN AND BROOKLYN BY A BRIDGE. THE STRUCTURE IS MADE OF MANGROVE STICKS LAID WITHOUT FASTENING ON A FRAMEWORK OF POLES. AT EACH STEP THE STICKS, SLIPPERY AND DECAYING FROM THE INCESSANT RAINS AND TROPIC HEAT, TURNED AND SLIPPED TREACHEROUSLY, THREATENING TO PRECIPITATE THE WALKER INTO THE MUD AND SLIME OF THE RIVER BELOW



MUD, CLOUD AND RAIN

2

Now that our own perils were over, I felt anxiety for the safety of those aboard the *Eureka*, knowing now too well the diabolic mazes of mud and tumultuous tides through which the vessel would have to pass before she joined us. Furthermore, I knew that those aboard would be just as anxious for our safety, and would be on the alert the whole time scouring the seas for us. The capacity of our native coxswain, with his proclivity for sailing close to the land, made me apprehensive that far from being all at sea, the ship's party would be in imminent danger of being all ashore. As I learnt subsequently, his propensity for proving the existence of mud-banks induced him to steer a curvilinear zig-zag course at times round and then across them.

Hill said that the ship's bow described every letter of the alphabet and numerals, excepting the letter "I" and number "I." McCulloch remonstrated with Vaieki upon his eccentric navigation, and endeavoured to lay out a more definite course by reference to the chart and compass. But these masterpieces of science conveyed nothing to this primitive helmsman, whose criticism of the compass and charts bore some conviction, especially as the navigation of this treacherous coast depends to a considerable extent on local knowledge, "Compass he no savvy where reef he stop! Compass he no savvy which way wind he come! Whaf-for white fella makem pitcher (chart) when land he been see-em all a-time!"

After numerous futile arguments, he again expressed himself: "More better, Taubada, you an' me see along heye. Byme-by you an' me sit down colose hup along sandbank: we catch-em gooda palace fer hancor. No gooda you an' me stop along sea, s'pose big wind he come, all man he die. More better we keep colose hup along island."

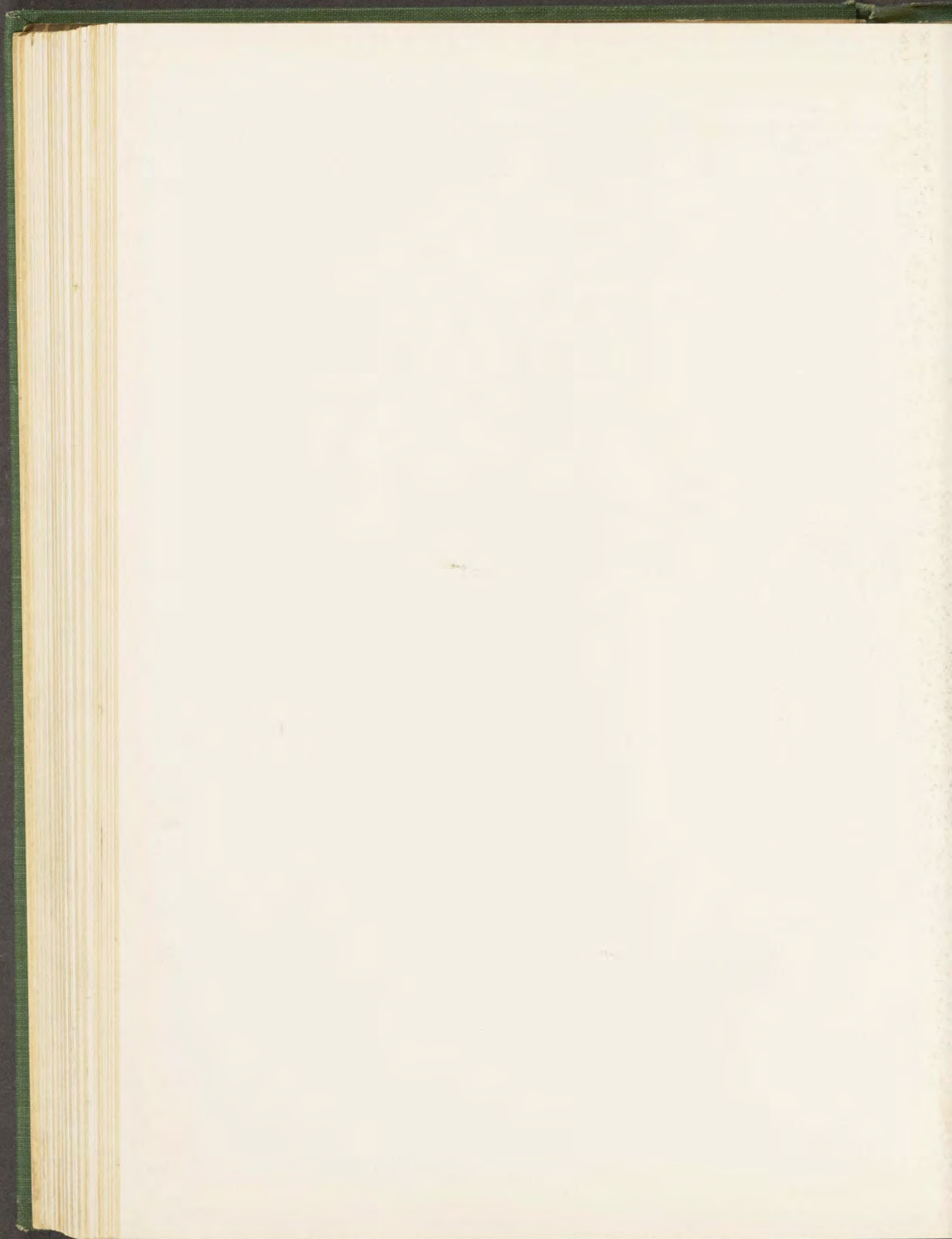
The structure is a marvel of Stone Age architecture and save for certain houses at Aramia, marks what is probably the high-water mark of building among people who have no metal and do their hewing with axes of stone.

The great ravi is constructed of mangrove saplings, bound with vines and thatched with the leaves of the sago palm. The tufts of palm leaf swaying from the peak of the entrance are charms hung up to prevent the entrance of evil spirits.

This ravi, the largest seen on the voyage, was seventy feet high at the entrance and three hundred and eighty feet long. From the peak of the entrance it slopes away to a height of some ten feet at the extreme rear end. It was built on a forest of piles made from mangrove trees above an expanse of thick mud. The building of such a house may be a matter of months, even years, as the work progresses by stages at times deemed auspicious for certain features of construction. Each stage is marked by a feast and a dance which tradition has assigned to the occasion. In times not far distant the completion of a Ravi had to be consecrated by sprinkling the threshold with human blood.



ENTRANCE TO THE GREAT KAU RAVI AT KAIMARI



MUD, CLOUD AND RAIN

So bowing to superior wisdom and knowledge, the chart was rolled up, and the vagaries of the compass were hidden from sight in the unclean folds of cooky's tea towel. The *Eureka* accordingly kept close up, and when night fell, sat down more effectively on the mudbanks than was commensurate with the content of her white passengers. Whilst squatting in the mud off Goaribari Island several canoes came out, and at once the occupants were asked if they had seen the flying machine. Their negative reply caused general consternation aboard. Later on in casual conversation, they intimated pointing skyward, that they had heard a big noise high up in the sky and all had taken fright.

We had passed by Goaribari above the clouds, and our comrades aboard the *Eureka* were relieved. Day by day, the *Eureka* followed the intimate course of inlets and outlets, rolling sometimes towards, other times away from Daru. The evening tide saw the *Eureka* squatting complacently on mudbanks with the assurances that "when morning time he come, byme-by you an' me we float."

Finally, her sails rose above the brim of the sea, and as I scanned the dull line from Daru, I felt a great gladness. One of the worst stages had been crossed by air and sea, and soon we were reunited, laughing heartily over our strange yet perilous adventures. Only one of our party appeared sad—the official ethnologist. The violent rolling and discomfort of our playful vessel brought on a severe attack of *mal-de-mer*. It was during one of the paroxysms that his teeth went over the side. Henceforth personal appearances demanded a lugubrious expression.

3

Daru is one of the most outcast and isolated spots in the world—an insignificant silt islet set in a tawny sea which

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

nature has compassionately hidden by dense mangrove jungles and a species of eucalyptus. The white population comprises four officials, one missionary and two residents. There are also a number of natives associated with the Government station and the mission. A bygone magistrate did much to improve the place by planting magnificent hedges of gay foliated crotons and these alone make the place tenable. Mosquitoes are an irksome irritation but it is doubtful which harasses the white intruder the most—the mosquitoes, the officials or the missionary—or which irritates the community itself most.

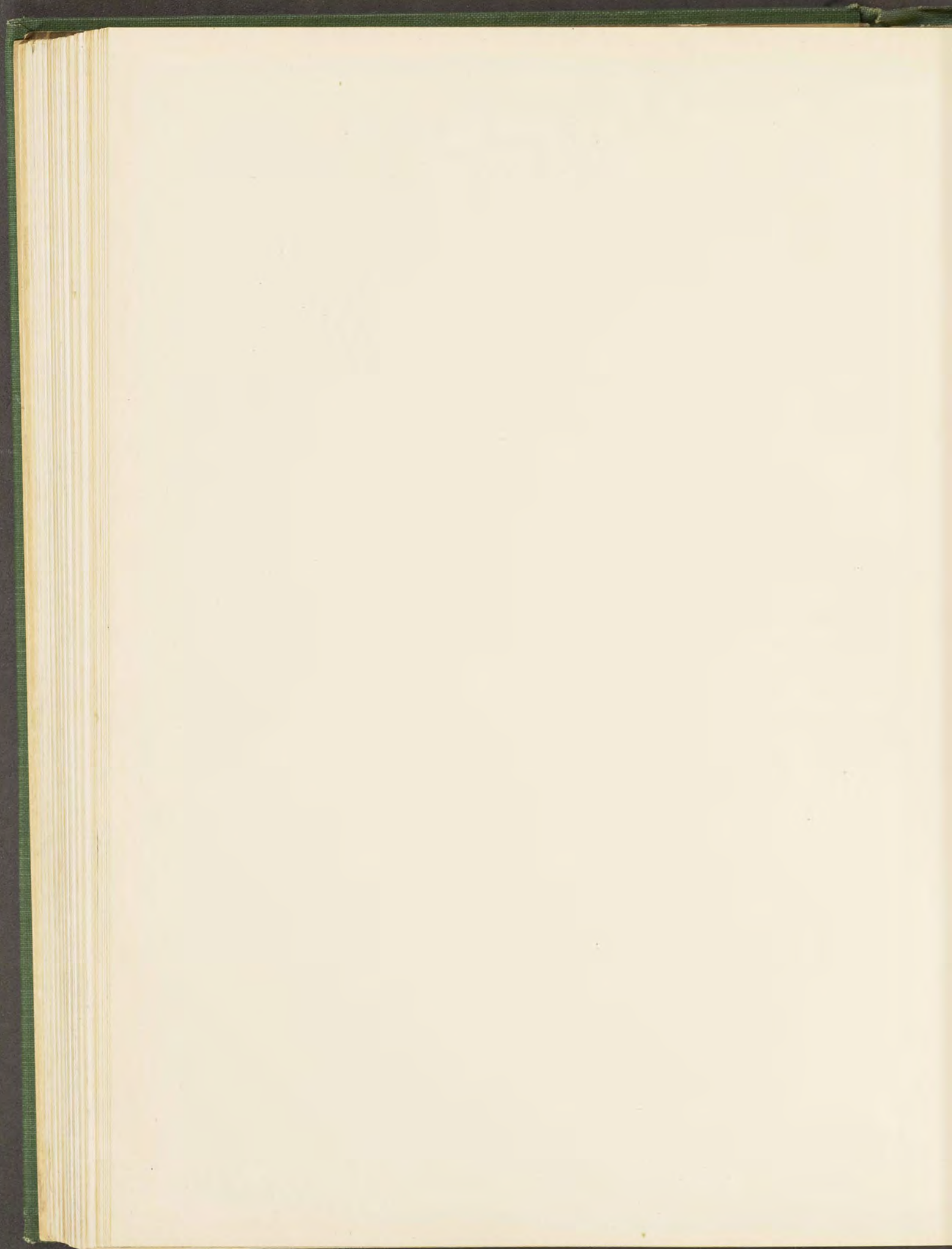
The clearance papers of the *Eureka* were examined microscopically for flaws and there being none, we escaped the usual fines. Our clearance papers classified the *Eureka* as a trading vessel and all the personnel as crew. Later we had occasion to travel across Torres Straits to Thursday Island which comes under the control of Queensland. The authorities there were more considerate and in order to save us bother and expense made out fresh clearance papers and exalted our vessel to a rank of yacht and the white personnel to passengers. Eventually when we returned to Daru there was great official annoyance. How dared we leave a Papuan port as a mere crew aboard a trading vessel and return as passengers aboard a yacht! We were threatened with being sent back one hundred and twenty miles for fresh papers, quarantine and fines.

When the attack of tropicitis into which our untoward action had plunged the officials returned to normal, the problem was solved by bracketing our vessel as a yacht and a trader and ourselves as crew and passengers!

Lang, Hill, and Williams remained at Daru, the two former to overhaul the "Seagull" before making a further flight into the interior. The rest of the party sailed across the Torres

MUD, CLOUD AND RAIN

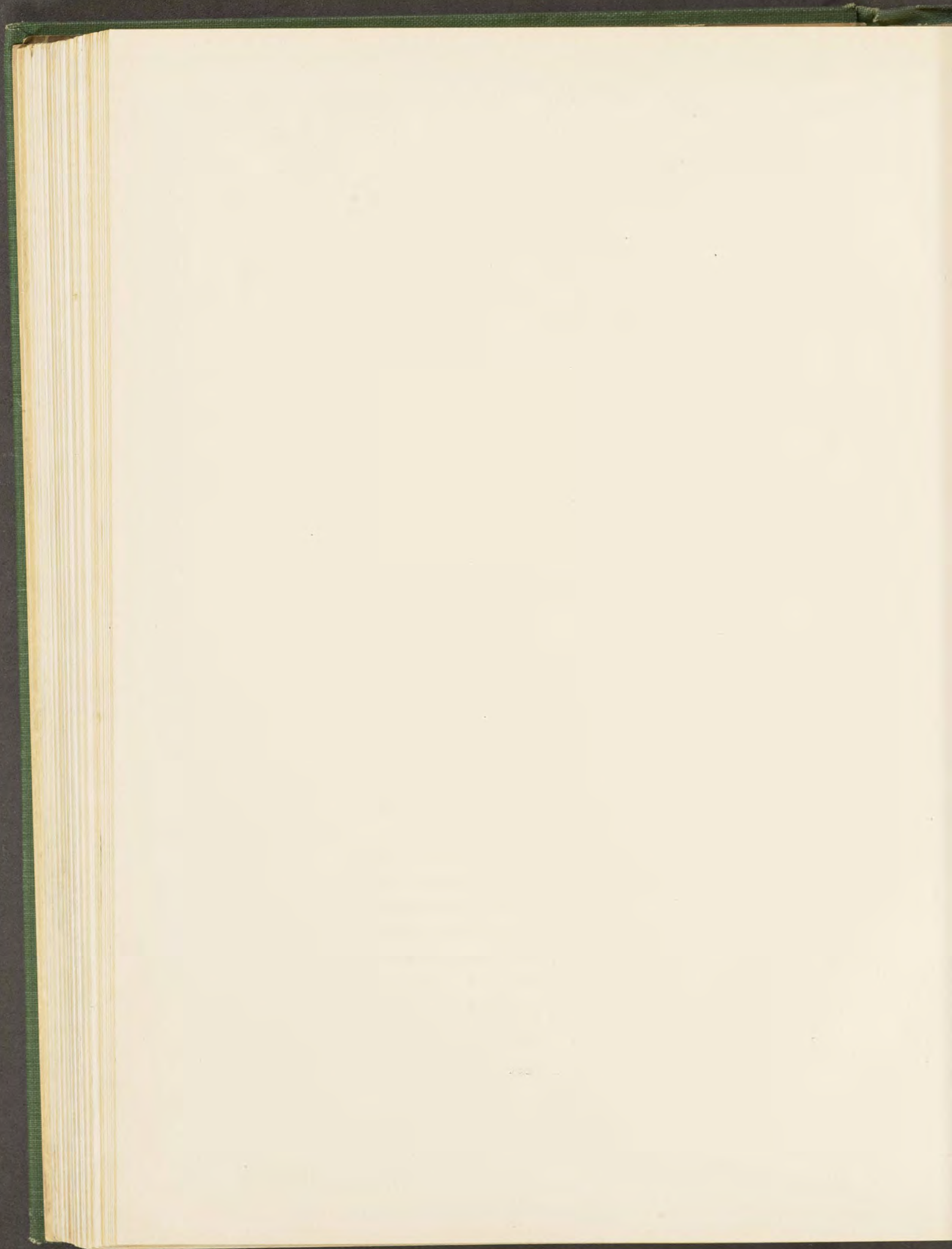
Straits to Thursday Island to overhaul our wireless apparatus which had been damaged by the terrific thunder storms experienced at Kaimari. While at Thursday Island I took advantage of the opportunity to study the *bêche-de-mer* fisheries and the habits of that strange herbivorous mammal, which inhabits these waters—the Dugong.



CHAPTER XI

BÊCHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

ROBINSON, CRUSOE, AND FRIDAY. NATURE LOVERS, UNLIMITED



CHAPTER XI

I

A BÊCHE-DE-MER lugger is not a pleasure yacht—she is a *multum in parvo*, encumbered with boilers and dinghys, with barely sufficient room on deck to move about. The divers work from the small dinghys, the lugger being anchored on the outskirts of the coral reef and acting as a depot vessel. Each dinghy is manned by a crew of three, an oarsman and two divers. The diver's complete rig is a pair of watertight goggles that fix closely into the eye cavities so as to exclude the sea water from the eyes.

In the reef shallows the three boats separated so as to sweep as large an area as possible. I accompanied two of the best men and being armed with a viewing box, a watertight contraption fitted with a glass bottom, was able to watch operations equally as well below water as above. This magic pane is pushed a few inches below the surface and one can peer down through the water. It is much like looking into a glorified aquarium.

Dabad puts on his water goggles; contorting his face into extraordinary grimaces—he is merely working the glasses into the eye cavities—and jumps overboard, nearly upsetting the frail dinghy in the manoeuvre. The water is only five fathoms deep so that I can clearly watch his movements and the floor of the sea beneath.

The bottom is a coral wilderness, a forest of stag antlers

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

and spongy formations like gigantic coxcombs. In grottoes beneath are colonies of sea urchins with long needle-like spicules and shellfish of form and colour extravagant and beautiful.

Shoals of gorgeously coloured fish dart away into coral recesses as Dabad swims around. Below is a giant clam lying with vise-like shells wide apart. Within the terrible shell the living clam phosphoresces like a huge green opal. It is a gorgeous object, but a fearful trap. A foot placed inadvertently into that yawn would bring the shells together with a clap, and if the foot was not severed, before the clam opened again the unfortunate victim would be drowned or fall a prey to the sharks that swarm these waters. I observed one of these shells four feet in length. Such a shell would probably weigh close on half a ton.

Dabad remains below but half a minute. I notice him snatch up a couple of cucumber-like objects and shoot up to the dinghy.

Splash! And up he bobs, exhaling breath with a strange whistling gasp. In each hand he holds up a fine sea-slug or *bêche-de mer*. Throwing them into the boat, I observe they are spotted leopard-like, and measure about twelve inches long by nine inches in girth. "Them fella Tiger," says Wun who is at the oars.

Dabad dives again, this time bringing up a perfect plant-like form of blue coral. A huge clam shell is brought up, and it takes our combined efforts to heave it aboard. Dabad, observing that I was interested in the formations, made a collection of gorgeous corals, shells and other treasures from the reef.

The sea is a vast lucky dip and our reward is an amazing collection of slimy and repulsive sausage and cucumber-shaped objects. Some are of remarkably vivid and exquisite colouring, but to my eyes they are the least enticing and least appetizing forms of life that have their home on the great coral reefs.

BÊCHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

Amidships is secured a boiler of about 100 gallons capacity and a couple dozen buckets of seawater are boiling within. The bêche-de-mer are thrown aboard and then dropped into the boiling water. One can observe them through the sizzling broth shrivel up like the deflation of toy sausage balloons.

An hour's cooking sets the air a-reek with the odour of unsavoury soup, and the eyes weep with irritation from the smoking oven alongside. The "fish" are ready for the next operation. They are ladled out on to the deck, and, to my astonishment, I find that they now resemble hunks of boiled leather, having shrunk to one-fifth the natural size. Cleaning by cutting along their length and propping open with small bamboo sprigs is the next most tedious process.

Finally the catch is transferred to the batter, a large cupboard affair with sliding trays and wire net bottoms. The "fish" are laid out in rows on the netting and smoked for twenty-four hours. They are then sufficiently mummified to repel the attacks of insects and (by the appearance I should say) also humans. Appearances, however, are oftentimes deceptive. The fish find a ready and almost exclusive market in China.

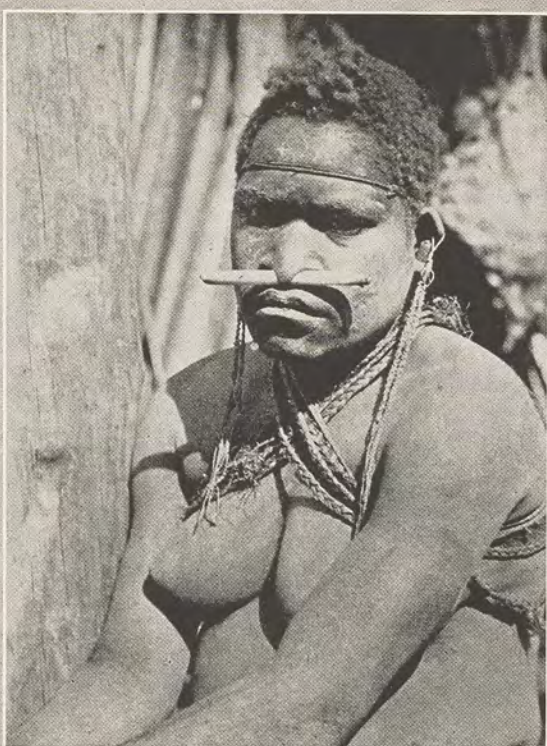
Only last year seven hundred pounds per ton was realized for the prime varieties and three hundred pounds per ton for the poorer qualities. The bottom fell out of the market this season, three hundred pounds down to forty pounds per ton being the ruling figures.

In China the bêche-de-mer is cut into small cubes and with other viands a remarkable soup is concocted. This soup is credited with the strange virtue of making "old men feel young again."

Favoured by a four-knot tide, the return passage to Mabuiag took six hours, and even our brine-pickled crew cheered and

The pair above are husband and wife who have gone into mourning for a dog. As a sign of their grief they are smeared with the mud. The old woman at the left below is mourning for a husband. The corresponding magnitude of her loss is marked by the ligatures which are bound painfully tight about her limbs and body. As most delta villagers rarely marry outside their own villages they are virtually all related by fairly close ties, and when there is a death in the village the whole community is thrown into mourning. The appearance of an entire village smeared with the mud above which their houses are built is weird in the extreme, and it requires only a slight stretch of the imagination to believe that they are creatures of some lower order which crawl out from the mud for a part of each day.

The gentleman at the right below with the bone ornament through his nose is the mayor of Kaimari who by some miracle was not in mourning and appeared in his own skin. The contrast in colour between him and his mud-smeared constituents is striking. Smeared with mud, the natives take on a sickly grey-green appearance.



CITIZENS OF KAIMARI, WITH AND WITHOUT MUD



BÊCHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

sang as we beat through the tide race by Passage Island into the calm waters behind the bulwarks of the home reef. On the narrow beach, backed by storm-lashed palms, the villagers had massed to proffer a hearty welcome. A score of willing hands hauled the dinghy through the surf, and we stepped dryly ashore into the midst of a motley gathering to a babel of questionable greetings. Males of sturdy physique girdled about the loins with a short calico wrap lava-lava, women with gowns flowing from neck to toe and blowing skin-tight; inquisitive infants, and numberless, in Nature's brown bare skins. . . .

The village of Mabuiag—bungalows of plaited palm leaf and grass thatch—reclines with its inhabitants 'neath the shade of sheltering palms, an Arcadian spot when the sun burns high, but when the grove is thrashed by tempest, as it was during our landing, a good place to be out of. Forty-foot palms, their slender stems bowed to the gale, seemed quite inadequate to support their overburden of fruit and cumbrous plumes. I was about to inquire of a native, if ever the nuts fell, when I received an unexpectedly demonstrative answer. A whizz and I instinctively leaped forward. There followed a heavy thud, and a large coconut, shrivelled from a lofty cluster, half-buried itself in the sand just where I had been standing. A pith-helmeted head is fragile compared with the rind of a native's skull, and this convincing proof of Newton's first law induced me in the future to tramp the open beach when the warring winds hurled down these husky bombs.

In calm or breeze or gale, whether silhouetted against the blue tropic sky, silvered by zenith sunbeams glinting on wind-stirred fronds, or bowing preened plumes before the hurricane, the coconut enchants the eye and enraptures the mind with its glorious elegance. To the islanders the coconut is the palm of life. The fruit furnishes both meat and drink, the plaited leaves provide shelter and dress, and the husks and cast-off

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

fronds fuel, and a score of other essentials. In fact, should all other sources fail, life may be entirely supported on a tropic sand-bank so long as coconuts grow there!

A score of small rocky islets lie scattered around the coasts of Mabuiag, and they assist in making more attractive an island that is otherwise featureless and commercially barren. The ridges which rise directly behind the village and steeply from the coasts are composed mostly of weathered and decomposed igneous rocks, incapable of growing vegetation beyond straggling scrub and plenteous ant-hills. Wealth lies not on the island but in the circumjacent seas, where treasure, rarer than diamonds, lies submerged amid the grassy plains of the deep.

Three large cutters are owned by the natives, and throughout the pearling season a very substantial existence is harvested from the sea. During the changeful nor'west monsoonal period, from December to March, pearling is discontinued in favour of dugong-hunting. This strange mammal frequents the seas to the north in large numbers, and is universally esteemed by the natives for the abundance of its excellent meat. The primitive method of capture is reminiscent of the fine old whaling days, when a conquest was made only by daring pertinacity and life risk.

The native of Torres Straits is a valorous sportsman, and the thrill and danger of the winning holds a lure superior to the prize itself. The native skipper of the *Mabuiag* invited me to hunt the dugong aboard his vessel. We would return only after a capture, for it is a prick to the pride to sail back empty-handed. Our crew, twelve all told, was as patched and bizarre as the craft upon which I had embarked. Old men, young men, youths, and infants more interested in the cinema than the dugong; some as weather-beaten and emaciated as our sails, others about as enervated and rotund as the sea-cow we hunted.

Our barque, after many patchings, held reluctantly at bay



A VIEW OF THE VAST DELTA DIVISION OF PAPUA FROM MOUNT NETRI THE ONLY HILL FOR HUNDREDS OF MILES. TO TAKE THIS PHOTOGRAPH IT WAS NECESSARY TO CLEAR AWAY SOME FIVE OR SIX ACRES OF IMPENETRABLE JUNGLE. THE WORK WAS DONE BY FIFTY NATIVE CONVICTS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. WOODWARD, THE MAGISTRATE, AND HIS NATIVE CONSTABULARY



BÊCHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

the ocean from encroaching within the dark, malodorous, space exalted by the name of hold. This latter was divided into two compartments—the hold proper, which in normal times carried the cargo of pearl shell and now the crew; and the after cabin, which I took over—a scarcely adequate apartment for such a prime hog as myself. Our motive power—wind; and judging by the endless bedlam aboard we carried an ample supply. Little of the original sails was left, and the amazing chequer design they presented when the sun shone through the holes; and the bits of string and bootlaces that held the patchwork to boom and mast, did not reassure me regarding our life on the ocean wave should the stormy winds blow.

In this battered barque we put to sea through the tide rip by Passage Island, bearing north past weather-eroded islets, over coral reef and pearling ground to the feeding place where the dugong sports and grazes. Aloft on the gaff squats the eagle-eyed look-out; had he wings also I should have felt more secure; for apprehension filled me that the rotten ropes and blocks would chafe through and crash our birdman and top-hammer upon our heads momentarily.

Perched on the bowsprit end stands the harpooner, holding alert a fourteen foot shaft, bottle-shaped at the business end, and bored to receive a small removable barb. To this latter, a coil of rope is attached, which in turn is secured to the daring "killer man." Our advent on the fishing ground was marked by a dead calm. The sails fell limp, and the sight of numerous dugong disporting and rising to "blow" just beyond reach was more exasperating to myself, standing sweltering by the cinema, than the hunters, whose patience seemed tireless.

3

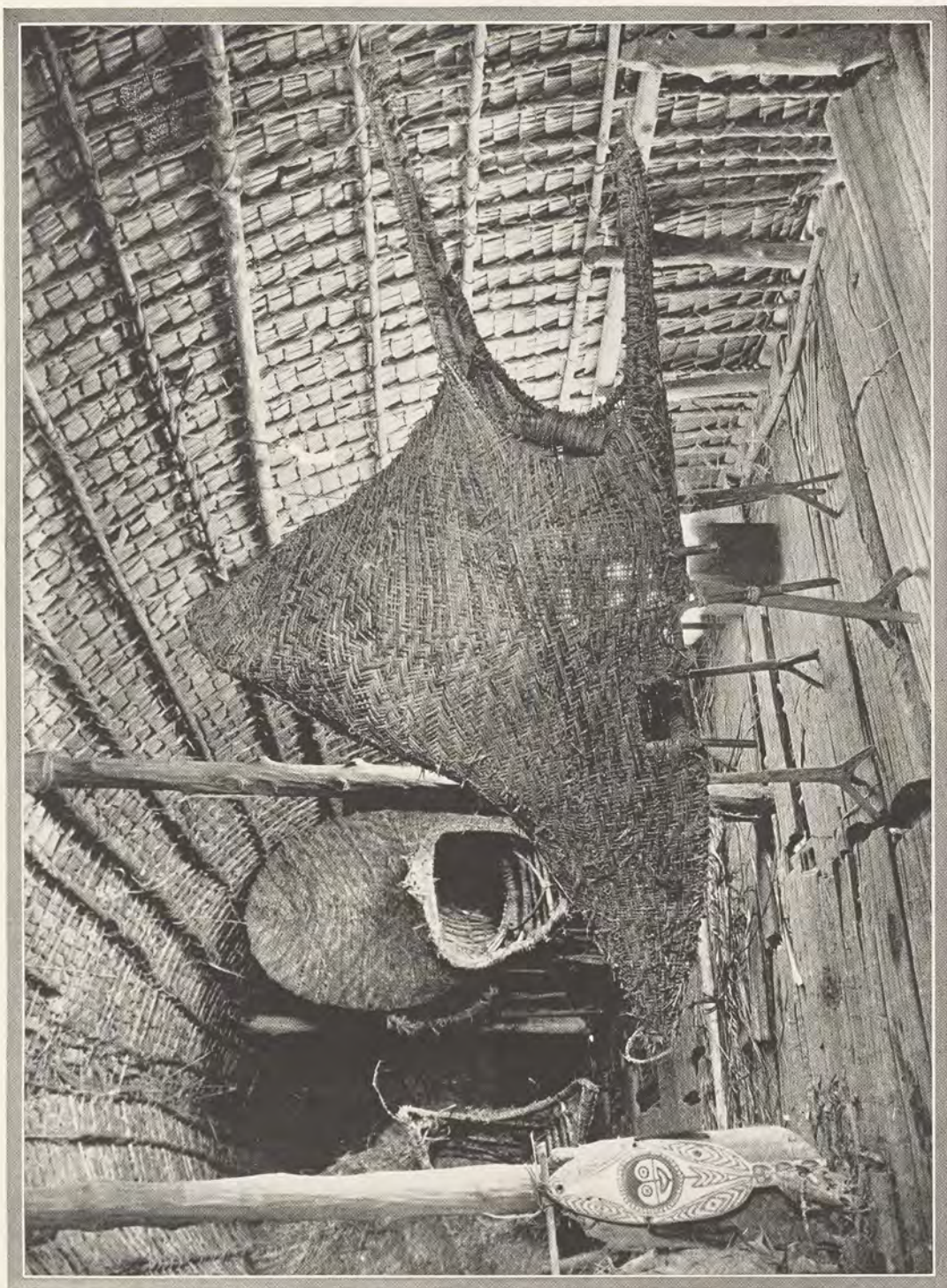
The calm endured all day, until the clouds, as if unable to bear the heat any longer, burst into flame and melted the

The Kopiravi are kept hidden in the extreme end of the great crocodile-shaped Ravi in the gloom of a sanctum which it was forbidden to enter. The photographs were taken only by the use of trickery.

These masks, made in the image of the dread crocodile which haunts the muddy waters of the delta country, have feet suggestive of the cassowary. The complete ramifications of their place in the tribal religious ceremonies remains somewhat obscure. It is known, however, that they are used in the ceremonies which mark the coming of age of the young men in the tribe.

In the days before government control the bodies of sacrificial victims and of enemies killed in battle were placed in the jaw-like openings as offerings to the spirit of the Kopiravi. On the following day the bodies were removed for the gruesome feasts. Under each Kopiravi was found a palm leaf parcel filled with "bullroarers," flat bits of wood fastened to a fibre cord. When the cord is whirled through the air an uncouth, roaring is produced like the bellowing of a bull. This is the voice of the Kopiravi which instills terror throughout the tribe.

With the progress of years, the Kopiravi and similar paraphernalia of superstition have come gradually to be instruments of terror by which the old men of the tribe keep the young men, the women and children in a state of submission. As a result the old men live on the fat of the land, receiving the best of the fish, meats and coconuts which are placed as offerings before the Kopiravi.



A GLIMPSE IN "THE HOLY OF HOLIES"—A SECRET CHAMBER AT THE REMOTE END OF KAU RAVI, KAIMARI, SHOWING THE SACRED KOPIRAVI



BÊCHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

ocean to gold. When the vulcan taskmaster dipped beyond the western wave, the south exhaled a cool breath, and the stars dancing out to scintillate over crystal sky and glassy sea, we glided over a reef and ran out the anchor. Then there was a sound as of a cracking of a dozen coconuts, and twelve dusky forms seated forward began their evening meal. Like a hermit crab in the dinginess of his hovel, I supped sumptuously on damper and dugong. Then to my virtuous couch perhaps to sleep, perchance to dream.

The novelty of my surroundings,—a coffin in size but not in length—was not conducive to the former, whilst the latter were uninvited realizations of nightmares. It was at the very witching hour, while ruminating on the harshness of hardwood flooring boards, that numerous creepy sensations came over me. Symptoms, I meditated; to my alarm they rapidly developed into innumerable pin-prickings. Prickly heat of a surety; then, to my utter dismay, I was assailed by a rapid succession of stabbings—fever at last!

In a delirium I struck a light to find my quinine. Merciful heavens, what a sight! What a fright! I had invaded the pill-box of creeping hordes, and the legions of the bug were warring against me! The cockroaches had opened the counter-attack, and every creeping, crawling parasite of domestic and tropical familiarity was on the march! It was indeed a body-stirring spectacle—an entomologist's paradise! Every one of the famous collection of the three hundred and sixty-five Rothschild fleas was here represented, and an extra, which I called "The Leap Year Flea," on account of his extraordinary hopping proclivities.

Not being a trifle interested in either entomology or aromatics, I retreated in good order, ill-conditioned, and lay me down on deck to count the stars. At last I came to the conclusion that one might just as well try and number the

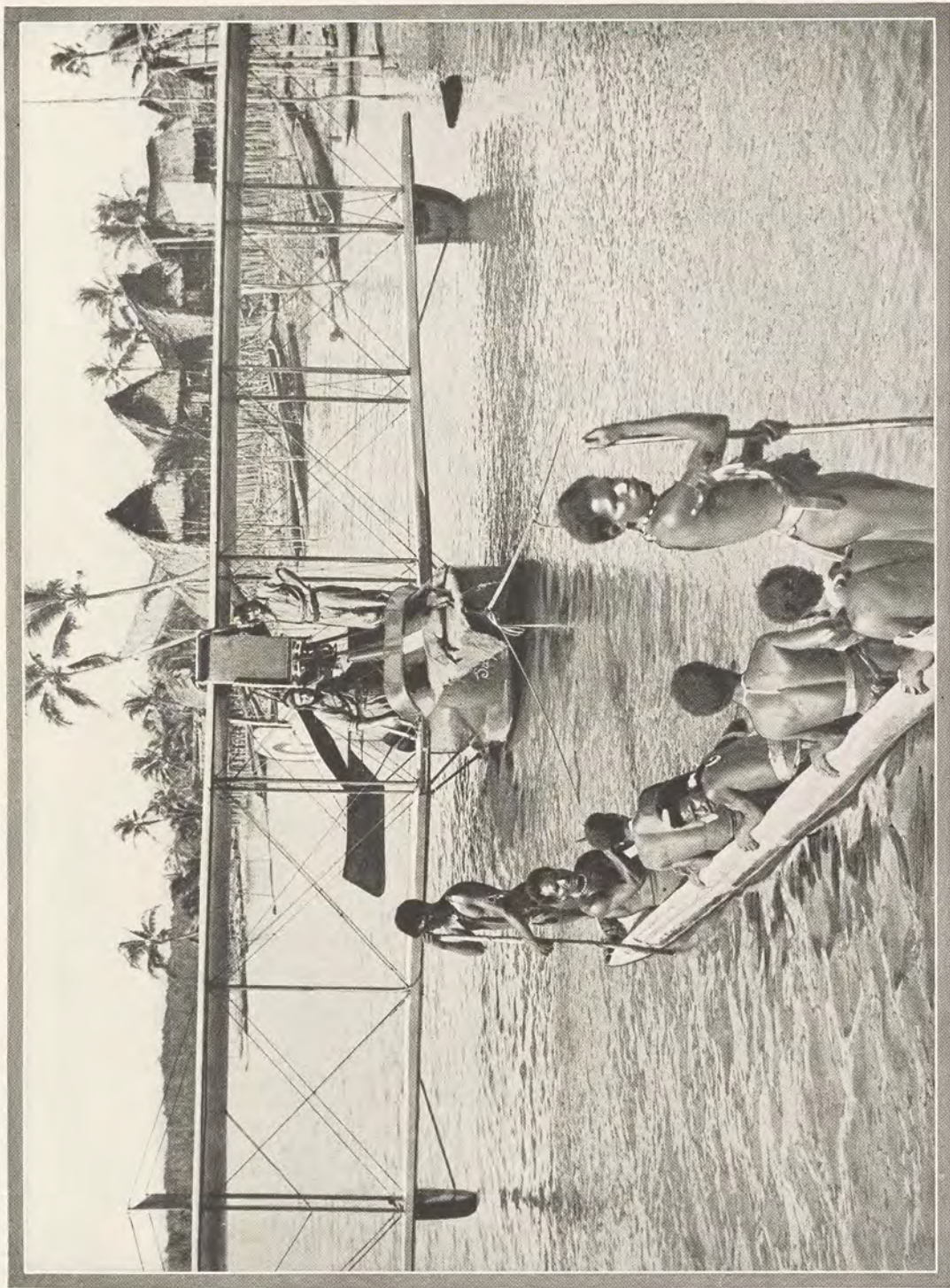
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passengers aboard the ship, and so off to sleep. I was awakened at dawn by the pleasant sound of the running tackle. Sail was being made, and the vessel was under way. A fair wind blew, but evidently the dugong scented us and with evident disapproval, kept well out of range.

We zigzagged the seas, all the crew alert at their various posts, mine all-trying as for the hundredth time I changed the heavy cinema from port to starboard and reversed as the vessel's course and swinging boom dictated. The relentless orb stood above our mast like a scourge, glaring on sweltering decks and blinding sea, and our hushed ship glided on. Several "almosts" stirred flagging interests and wavering patience, until the eagle eye aloft guided our bows almost on top of a rising back.

In petrified silence all quivered with excitement. The spearman, in tense readiness, poised his shaft, and with his whole weight and energy behind it, made a flying leap, driving the barbed head through the thick hide. The hushed spell was ended by a wild cheer, the rope leapt out, and the killer, standing by for a few moments, grasped the slackening line and flung himself into the sea. Blowing a good deal, and pounding his chest, the waterlogged spearman climbed aboard, still holding the shaft, the barb having disengaged itself as intended.

Our second Nimrod went aquaplaning over the sea, head and shoulders spurting a great bow wave, towed by the captive mammal. A four hundred yard charge, and then a slackening allowed him to hand-over-hand the line until he came up to the captive. Then I witnessed a strange duel—an aquatic buck-jumping worthy of de Rougemont. In the midst of a foaming circle our hero emerged, riding astride the sea-cow, which was doing its utmost to dethrone him. Disposing weight so as to keep the head submerged, the combat was soon over,



A SPECIAL COMMITTEE FROM KAIMARI MAKES AN OFFERING TO PROPITIATE THE "DEMON WHICH FLEW DOWN FROM THE SKIES." THROUGHOUT THE STAY OF THE SEAPLANE AT THIS DELTA VILLAGE, THE NATIVES MADE AN OFFERING EACH EVENING AT SUNSET OF A PIG WHICH WAS PLACED REVERENTLY ON THE BOW OF THE "SEAGULL." DURING THE NIGHT THE PARTY REMOVED THE SACRIFICE AND IN THE MORNING THERE WAS GREAT REJOICING AMONG THE VILLAGERS WHO TOOK THE DISAPPEARANCE AS A SIGN THAT THE DEMON HAD EATEN THEIR OFFERING AND WAS PLEASED



BÊCHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

the beast being suffocated by drowning. The dinghy had already been lowered, and a crew was off to rescue the prize and its winner. Combined efforts hauled the dugong aboard, a fine specimen, ten feet, six inches in length, and weighing close on half a ton.

Dugong steaks are quite equal in taste and flavour to veal, but the natives gorge practically everything except the bones. The beasts are not in sufficient numbers for the commercial extraction of the fine oil they yield, but doubtless a lucrative industry might be conducted by boiling down the natives, whose oleaginous corpulence resembles dugong, exudes dugong, and reeks of dugong.

4

Our wireless having by this time been put in thorough repair by the Thursday Island Radio staff we went aboard the *Eureka* and returned across Torres Straits to Bramble Cay, an insignificant sand-covered coral reef some fifty miles from Daru. Bramble Cay is of intense interest on account of its being the favoured "nesting" haunt of large numbers of turtles. McCulloch, Dogodo and myself were put ashore while the *Eureka* went on to Daru to make ready for our forthcoming excursion into the interior with orders to return a week later.

A happy trio we marooned ones were. McCulloch alias Robinson, myself alias Crusoe, and our native servant Friday.

On an inviting greensward was pitched our home and kitchen, where Friday slept with a collection of cameras, stuffed birds, pickled fishes, preserving jars, dynamite, and other tragic equipment. We improvised a hearth from wreck fragments, and attiring ourselves in native raiment felt the freedom of the simple life.

The seabirds were wheeling high amongst the stars; we had invaded their home, and from the unseen dark they filled

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the air with jargoning and plaint. All the night was noisy, but their cries mingling with the ceaseless surf sounded melodious, and once more I recalled those castaway days on Elephant Island, when the angered elements thrashed the drift ice, and the penguins chattered in the rookery near by, until we were saved from the terrible drift on the ice-floes.

Bramble Cay was rather an outcast spot to expect Father Christmas to visit. Nevertheless we hung up the remnant of our socks—to dry. It is queer that most things eerie seem to happen at “the very witching hour.”

A horrified voice awakened me: “Taubada! Taubada! He come! Come quick time! Big feller he come!”

I called my friend Robinson, fearful lest the elusive Christmas might escape me, and hurried out, match in hand, into the kitchen, where a great commotion was taking place. From the darkness wild, gasping ejaculations from Friday: “I bin cachem.”

“What feller you bin catch?” I queried.

“I bin cachem turtle that feller Kissmus you bin talk about sen halong!”

Quickly I struck another match and shrieked a loud cry of delight. The gallant Friday was grappling with a huge turtle and striving to overturn her.

“Why crow so, Crusoe?” said Robinson. “Bring a lamp—a lighted lamp. Christmas has visited the house!”

Quickly the turtle was turned over and lay helplessly flopping her flippers to the benzine glare. No toy tin turtle of toddler days, nor tinned “mock” muck, but a real five hundred pound turtle and a nest of one hundred and fifty eggs!

Truly a worthy chick for a Christmas feast; and again the night birds carolled us to sleep.

In the morning Robinson found a present in his starboard sock, and to my astonishment they were in my boots, under



A TORRES STRAITS EDEN. THE VILLAGE OF MABUAG, SITUATED ON A TINY ISLAND IN THE MIDST OF SEAS ABOUNDING WITH DUGONGS, THE STRANGE SEA MAMMALS WHICH JULES VERNE INTRODUCED INTO MORE THAN ONE FANCIFUL TALE. THE RESIDENTS OF MABUAG ARE SUFFICIENTLY CIVILIZED TO WEAR "MOTHER HUBBARDS," GARMENTS WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION OF PAPUA WISELY PROSCRIBES



BECHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

our beds, boxes, and everywhere—fine, large centipedes. We discovered our rice supply upset by our clumsy invader, and to sort grains of rice from grains of sand is a job entailing patience which the adage asserts woman only knows!

I have written an ode to a penguin egg. I could write odorously to turtles. This strange creature, neither fish, flesh not fowl, nor good red herring, takes an excessive ecstasy in laying. Its eggs savour not of fish, perhaps a little foul, though infinitely preferable to red herrings. Beaten to omelettes or tossed into flapjacks—adequately expressed by bonser—a gastronomic luxury! A clutch of one hundred and fifty is sufficient to make an omelette for even the most rapacious, capacious gourmand.

When we discovered centipedes in our hats and blankets I arrived at the conclusion that our camp had too many pedes about for our peace of body and mind, so we demolished our home and re-erected it on the coral sands.

The gannets had taken a tenure of the rookery near by, and "Robby" rooked the nests for egg collections and stuffed many fine birds with wadding for future glass cases. Footprints in the sands indicated that turtles had invaded the banks in force during the night. The sands were pitted with small shell holes, where they had been indulging enthusiastically in egg-laying competitions. The scene was reminiscent of a miniature battlefield criss-crossed by the tracks of tanks, which indeed these amphibians resemble when on the move. Friday located the shell dumps by thrusting a spear down through the sand; the location of a dump was indicated by the spear suddenly sliding through into the eggs and being coated by egg-flip when withdrawn. The turtle so cunningly camouflages its nest as to be quite undetectable, excepting by this process of egg divining.

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

5

Flung by furious power, a battered mast lay bedded on the reef; a twisted anchor and rust-flaked cable, a spar and scattered remnants of a ship. Of what manifold vicissitudes might these tell! The rovers' song of prouder days, the lilt of merry laughter, the cry of impending doom, all seemed yet to haunt these shattered fragments, marking an inexpressibly sad foreground to the failing western sky.

Then night settled down, and the birds came home from the sea, crying to us unseen from the infinite ceiling of stars.

The sea swish laved the beach with phosphorescent fire, rustling pleasantly the shells. As we wandered, our torchlight scared myriads of crabs into the foam or into holes, the excavation of which we had disturbed. A dark object came slowly from the sea, moving forward by each wave impulse. Painfully, by jerky inches, then up the steep sand-bank, pausing after each effort to regain breath and energy.

Many turtles were coming ashore to deposit their eggs—a process which we studied intimately. The labour of moving their unwieldy bulk over the loose sands seemed a cruelty of nature. Above high-tide reach mother turtle stopped to roost and make her nest. Her front flippers began the excavation, throwing out showers of sand full fifteen feet. Over a ton of sand was thus shifted, and by constantly turning, a circular hole scooped out.

But it is rarely that the turtle lays in the first bunker. Probably, with the intent to camouflage and decoy, she jerkily jaunts off to another site and starts all over again, where, after much sighing and heaving, she might lay, or take it into her capricious noddle to "dig in" a third time; maybe defer her intentions to another night, and move off to sea again. After watching patiently for several hours, the third time de-

BÊCHE-DE-MER, DUGONG, AND TURTLES

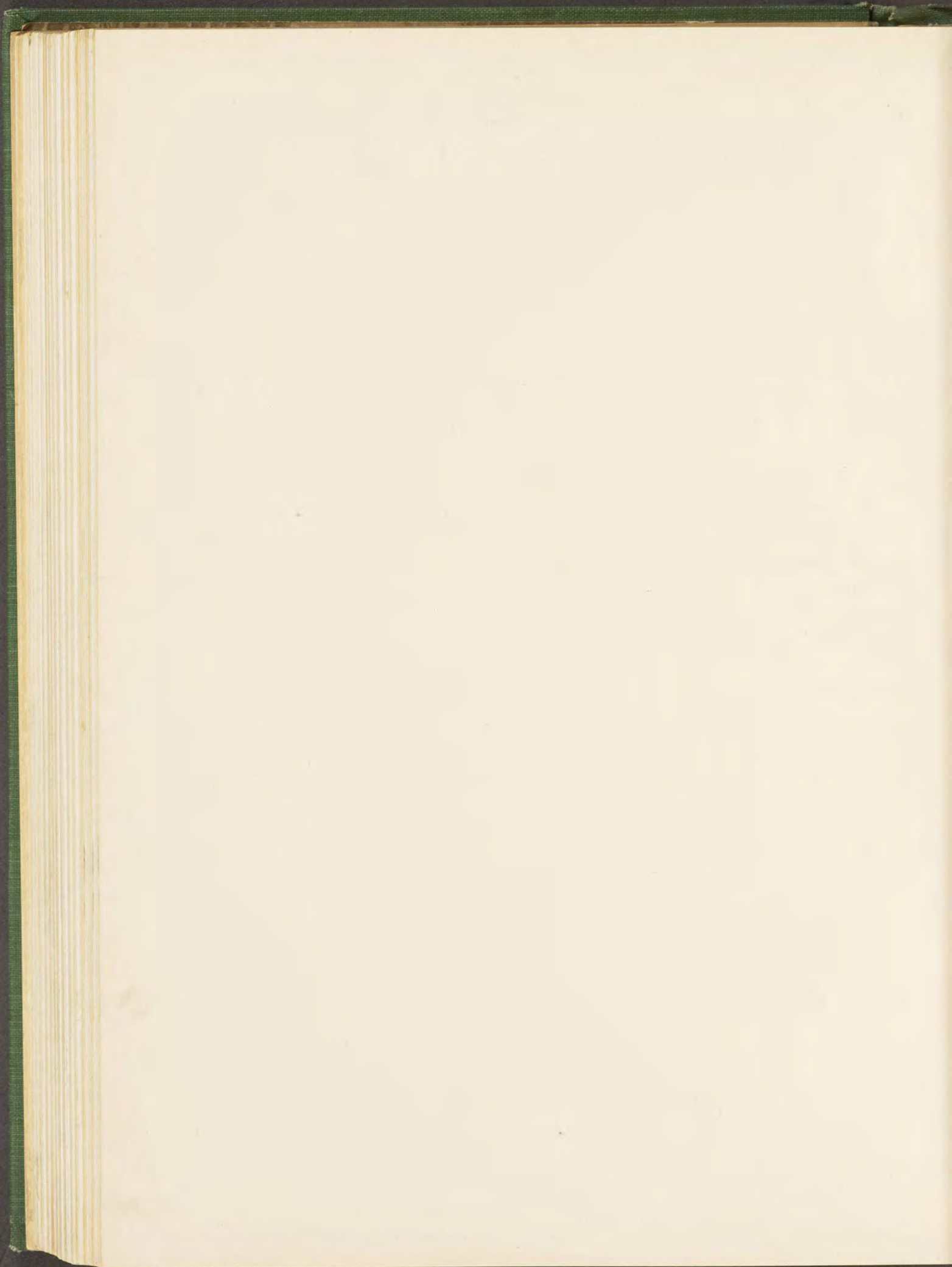
cided. Madame Shellback excavated a crater of five feet diameter and thirty inches deep, but this was only the beginning. The digging of the actual egg repository was a much more remarkable process. The hind flippers, with human hand cunning, delved vertically, extracting the sand and throwing it forward with the expertness of a past day fireman.

In order to prevent the small shaft from collapsing and sand from sliding during the operation, the second hind flipper was lightly pressed against the sand. The adroitness, skill and exactitude of every movement amazed us more than the subsequent egg-laying. The tail gently dipped into the hole, and the eggs were laid in ones and twos—there seemed to be no end to it. After depositing one hundred and sixty-nine eggs our prolific hen rested a while, and then carefully concealing her exemplary effort with sand, gently compressed it with the posterior flippers.

When completed the anterior flippers vigorously shovelled sand back and covered the nest, so that its whereabouts were completely concealed. Then she returned to the sea.

The tropic rays beat on the sand, and tiny turtles incubated in due course, burrow up through the sand and make off to sea. By the margin awaits the sharks which evidently esteem these tender cherubim as we do terrapin.

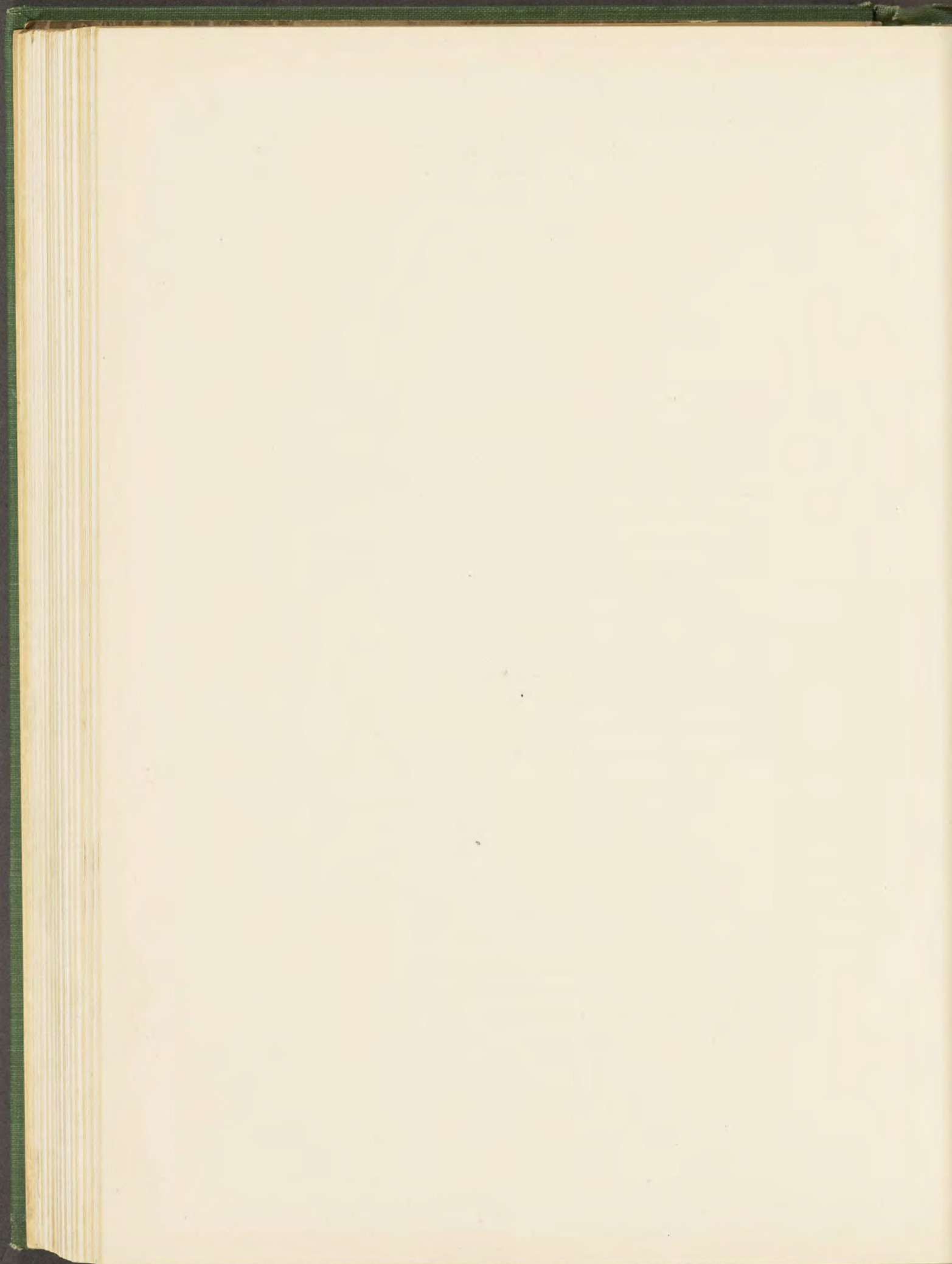
Sail-ho! Gradually it grows from a minute speck into the full outlines of our inelegant yet homely craft. It bids us pack up and make ready for further adventures. We left behind us little bits of Empire—empty tins from Britain and her dominions—and carried away film shadows and pleasant memories of our partnership in the firm of Robinson, Crusoe & Friday. Nature lovers unlimited.



CHAPTER XII

UP A TROPIC RIVER INTO THE UNKNOWN

ADURU AND THE UNTAMED, LONELY PARADISE BEYOND.



CHAPTER XII

1

UPON our return to Daru I was met by Lang and Hill who both looked very disconsolate. A thorough overhaul of the seaplane disclosed the fact that the fabric on the wings was completely rotten and the machine unairworthy. Further, incessant rain had fallen at Daru the whole time we have been away, and our last flight from Kaimari had been made with the fabric so depreciated by the rigours of tropic decay that a finger could be poked readily through it. There was but one course open, which in spite of the hazardous flying conditions I was loath to do, and that was to send Lang and Hill across Torres Straits by air and cancel further flying. Accordingly I laid out a course by way of certain islands and called up Thursday Island station by wireless to ascertain the weather conditions.

Two days later we received a call that the boisterous weather had moderated. The opportunity had arrived. Lang and Hill went aboard; the engine was started up and the machine took off just as the storm began breaking again over Daru. We allowed two hours for the machine to reach her destination. Knowing the depreciated condition of the machine, it seemed an age. McCulloch patiently awaited by the receivers and then punctually on time the message came back through the ether. "That the 'Seagull' had landed safely at

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

Port amidst great enthusiasm and had taxied up to McNulty's 'Pub.'"

And so a great load was lifted from my mind. A later wireless announced that Lang and Hill and the Thursday Island folk were toasting our future success at the "Pub." We brought out a bottle and toasted a reply message. "Here's to good old Andy and Alec and the good folks of Thursday Island."

January 3.—Now that the perils of the air have passed without accident of any description the highest spirits prevail and the party is happier than at any time during the voyage.

Mr. Riley (Rev.) of the London Missionary Society, which has a post here, very kindly lent me a pilot. Malaki has an intimate knowledge of the passage as far as Mediri. The course is treacherous and shallow and I have no desire to strand on a mudbank in the estuary of the Fly River, I therefore deemed it wise to carry a pilot whose local knowledge might save me weeks, or even possible disaster.

We left Daru at ten forty-five A.M. just as the tide was beginning to run out, and headed across the shallows for Tauru Passage. The mists which always hang like a screen between Daru and the estuary of the Fly, barred our way, but this time the screen which seemed to hang like a mystic veil over this amazing river, was less harsh than it appeared. A torrential downpour, and we were through into bright sunshine and calm. These conditions are the first favourable ones that we have encountered during our stay at Daru. The shallow entrance to Tauru passage is marked by stakes on either side; it led into a charming waterway with Parama Island to the east and the mainland stretching away to the west. The banks are covered with the eternal mangroves, which appear to verdure most of Parama Island and the mainland shore.

Once through Tauru passage we turned north and entered

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the muddy waters of the Fly Estuary, which at the mouth is about forty miles wide. This mighty stream though but five hundred to six hundred miles in length, is said to pour into the sea as much water as the Amazon.

In this great estuary lies an archipelago of islets of which Kiwai is the largest—thirty-two miles long by two to four wide. These islets are all built up from the river silt, mainly mud and mangroves.

Entering the Fly Estuary is like sailing on an inland sea. Fortune was kind throughout the day and favoured us with splendid weather and a fair wind. At evening, we dropped anchor off the little village of Daware.

We covered for the day approximately forty miles, our sails doing much work and our engine sneezing a great deal of the voyage. The *Eureka* is a fussy old tub, but in spite of her many failings she gets there and is comfortable and dry. The village of Daware did not impress me as a sanatorium. It appears to be the only half acre of dry land hereabouts; the rest is mangrove and eternal swamp.

January 4th.—Anchor was heaved up and we were under way at seven-thirty A.M. I was much nonplussed by endeavouring to reconcile our course with the chart made by the Admiralty in 1893. Islands marked on the chart appeared quite out of place, others appeared without reference on the chart; in fact, the whole topography appeared much altered. I was quite at a loss to understand the reason, especially as villages on the river banks, marked on the chart, were still in being. I learned the reason later from Mr. Beach of the Papuan Industries, who informed me that islands are frequently being washed away, others made, while the river continually alters its channel. Shoals come into being and in the next flood the entire topography might be altered again. The river

The dugong is a sea mammal, similar to the seal, which flourishes in the tepid waters of Torres Straits and forms one of the principal articles of food among the people of Mabuiag and the neighbouring islands.

The hunt is carried on by two men—the harpooner and the killer. The former leaps with the harpoon and drives the point deep into the uprising back of the dugong. The point detaches itself from the shaft and is attached to a length of rope held by the killer, who at the moment of the strike leaps overboard and is towed along by the dugong. When the seacow shows signs of weakening, the killer flings himself on its back and indulges in the strangest of all forms of rough-riding. The hunt is finished when the killer manages to hold the head of the dugong beneath the water until it is drowned. Although the waters are infested by sharks the natives appear to have no fear of them and are seldom attacked.



THE HARPOONING OF A DUGONG, ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING OF SPORTS, AND ONE WHICH CARRIES ON THE TRADITIONS OF THE OLD WHALING SHIPS



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banks are still covered by jungles of mangroves with an occasional small village on the infrequent high bank.

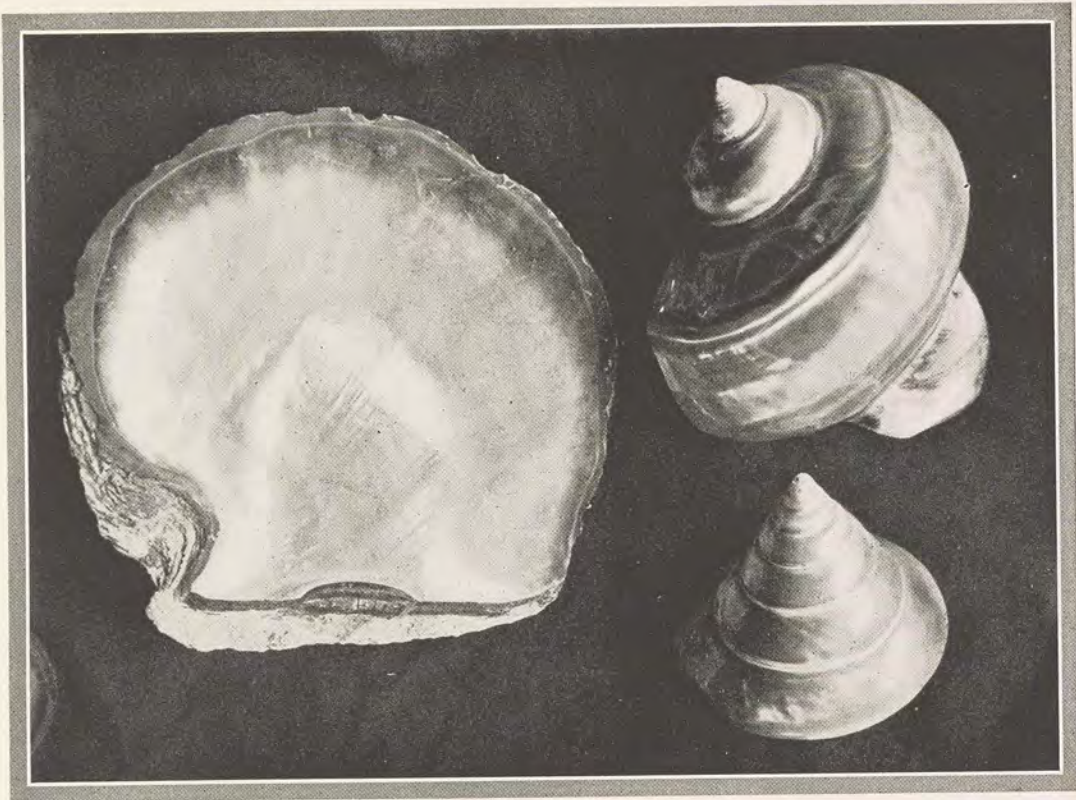
A remarkable feature of these so-called villages is the communal house. These strange structures are long houses in which dwell the entire community. So far I have not entered one of these abodes, but have only been able to observe them from the deck of the vessel. An occasional canoe rowed out as we passed, in the hope of trading bananas or garden produce, but we were anxious to make the best of the incoming tide, which was assisting us to the extent of two knots, and did not stop.

The people are rather diminutive in stature with short curly hair, Semitic cast of features and black beady eyes. I don't altogether like their appearance, which impresses one as of great cunning.

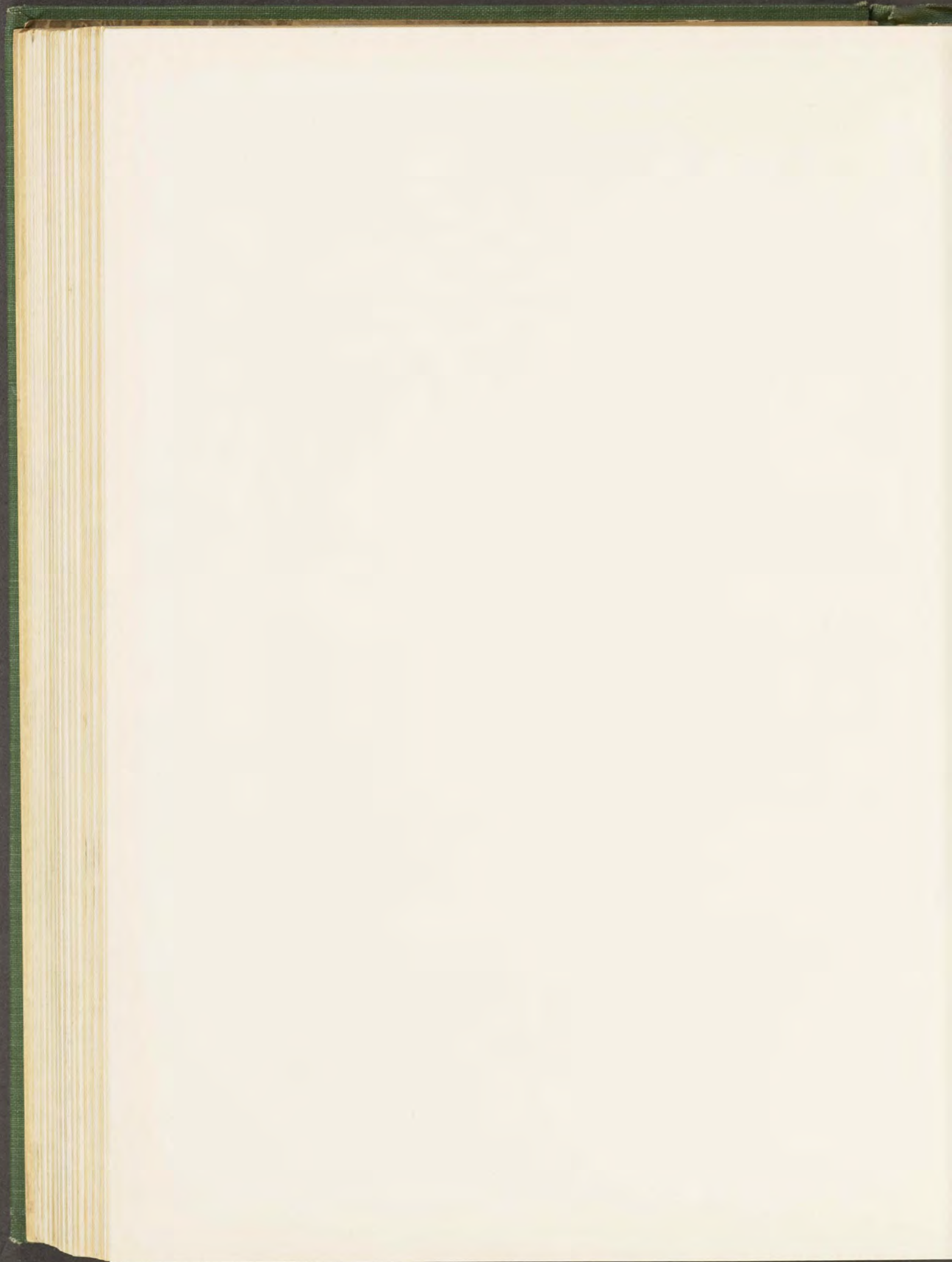
At one P.M. we dropped anchor at a plantation known as Mediri. This is the last habitat of white man on the river. In fact the only plantation for over 200 miles around. The single figure of a white man looks inexpressibly lonely and outcast in this dreary place. We carried a small mail and half side of bacon for Beach, so McCulloch and I went ashore to visit him and secure information concerning the course. The tide was rushing up river rapidly, so that it took all Dogai's energy to make the bank. Beach greeted us warmly; we were the first white men he had seen for months. He is married and has one daughter, Frances, ten years of age.

The plantation impressed me as a failure. The soil is much too clayey and heavy to produce coconuts and the rain is excessive. The rubber trees were lean and sapling-like, though they have been planted for seven years. The area of the plantation is four hundred acres and it is a mystery how it produces sufficient revenue to warrant keeping it going. Fortunately the venture is a missionary industrial one, and

The Torres Straits "Margaritifera" Mother-of-Pearl shell, largest of the three shells in the upper photograph, is fished for extensively in Torres Straits. Occasionally a magnificent pearl is found in one of these oysters but it is not for the jewel itself that the oyster is brought up from the depths. The mother-of-pearl is used principally for the higher grade articles such as knife handles, etc. The shell of the green sea snail and the trochus have a commercial value principally for "pearl" buttons.



(Above) THE PRINCIPAL COMMERCIAL SHELLS FOUND IN THE WATERS OF THE TORRES STRAITS. (Below) THE DUGONG OR SEA-COW WHICH IS AN ESTEEMED ARTICLE OF FOOD AMONG THE TORRES STRAITS ISLANDERS



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dividends are not such an important matter as if the plantation was worked on private capital.

Beach has been at many things in his time—a recruiter, bird collector, prospector and other vocations which a ne'er-do-well might take up in these parts. He is, however, a strong and kindly character and he at once appealed to me. We dined at his bungalow, a fine large house made of native materials which in these parts is, to my mind, infinitely preferable to the usual galvanized iron shacks.

Five o'clock in the afternoon is always an event at Mediri—Mrs. Beach feeds the fowls and animals. The food is principally shredded coconut, and the cats and dogs and feathery flocks all in one wild scramble mingle together in the evening repast. Then there are duels between cats and hens—and cockfights and much noise of cackling, meowing and barking; but beyond this the ceaseless routine of the plantation, the interminable rain, mud and isolation. Yet Beach is resigned to it; he has accepted the wild for his home and mate and is wedded to it.

The fireflies and frogs are very abundant at Mediri. The former flit in and out among the palm trees in scintillating myriads and the whole place resembles a fairy land with millions of lamps. Never have I heard such bedlam of frogs. Large frogs, small frogs, tenor frogs and basses, squealers, croakers and whistlers. Such a weird noise they made in their mighty dissonance among the swamps.

We left Beach at nine-thirty P.M. and went aboard. The path was ankle deep in water the whole way, which I am informed is the usual condition of the place. We had rather an exciting time climbing or rather sliding down the river bank in the dark. The tide had fallen about ten feet and the shore was deep in slime; scarcely better were the banks which are composed of clay, so that we slithered and made a terrible mess of

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ourselves. We were rewarded on getting into the dinghy by the wonderful view of the fireflies among the mangroves. The trees appeared as if lit by thousands of miniature electric bulbs being switched on and off. These were reflected in the mirrory waters, making one of the most enchanting scenes I have witnessed in this part of the world.

November 8th.—At daylight we were under way against the outrunning tide, but from the outset we had trouble through getting out of the deep channel. We sounded from the river bank, which we were following, across the shoal which occupies the greater width of the river, and found the passage on the opposite bank to that marked on the chart. This narrow channel we followed for several hours until we came up with a village on Kaled Island, which I intended visiting but for the timidity of the people who cleared out as we approached. Further, the creek which led to this village shoaled rapidly and the river banks bore evidence of assaults of the tidal bore, so that I deemed the vicinity a bad anchorage. We therefore continued to a more sheltered position where we made an anchorage until the passing of the bore waters.

During the interval two canoes came out from the shore and we entered into friendly relations with the natives who indicated that their village, Aduru, lay on the far bank.

These canoes are unexcelled throughout the Territory for the excellence of their workmanship, being up to fifty feet long and beautifully excavated. The outrigger is secured to the dugout by two slender distance pieces, or poles, which are fastened to the outrigger by a number of slender struts. These latter are so arranged as to prevent movement laterally or longitudinally. The whole arrangement is light and possessed of great strength. The vessel might be considered graceful and elegant. The paddlers sit on small cane crosspieces which are



THE CAMP OF ROBINSON, CRUSOE AND FRIDAY, NATURE LOVERS, UNLIMITED, ON THE CORAL BEACH OF BRAMBLE CAY. THE CAMP WAS
DRIVEN TO THE BEACH SAND BY AN INVASION OF MYRIADS OF CENTIPEDES WHICH INFESTED THE SPARSE SUCCULENT
VEGETATION THAT COVERS THE CAY



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bound onto the top sides of the canoe. The vessel once it is under way (which is done by sweeping broad strokes) is kept in motion by short rapid strokes, this method of propulsion evidently being more efficient against the swift running current than long broad sweeps.

It is worthy of note that these canoes can maintain readily the speed of our vessel against the current and in spurts readily pass us. (We are capable of making a speed of six knots.)

We duly dropped anchor off the village and after lunching went ashore, the dinghy deep with cameras, men and benzine tins, beads, tobacco and expectations.

We realized profitably in trading our chattels and eventually returned with much good native bric-a-brac and our expectations rewarded with heavy interest. Imagine one standing in the centre of a ring of wild-eyed savages, with a fleet of great canoes tethered in the peaceful creek nearby and the mighty Fly gliding its swift tides through the reeds just behind. In front three great houses raised up on sticks with the occupants idling on the threshold and looking down onto our dinghy. The smoke, rising through the roof and ascending to a cloud encumbered sky, the chatter of the wild voices and the air redolent with the strange and mysterious. . . .

We made our way along the narrow path by the creek and up the stairs railed by bannisters, ushered or rather followed by a long wake of strange people; we go everywhere and examine all things. We are of the privileged white race to which, in our impudence, we expect these savage people to fall subservient. Thus be it, and may it remain so; but to invade the privacy even of a cannibal's home and pull his belongings about while we question him seems arrogant.

We went in through a small opening over a doorstep which required a mighty stride to step over, for it was three feet high; and suddenly we found ourselves in an acrid gloom through

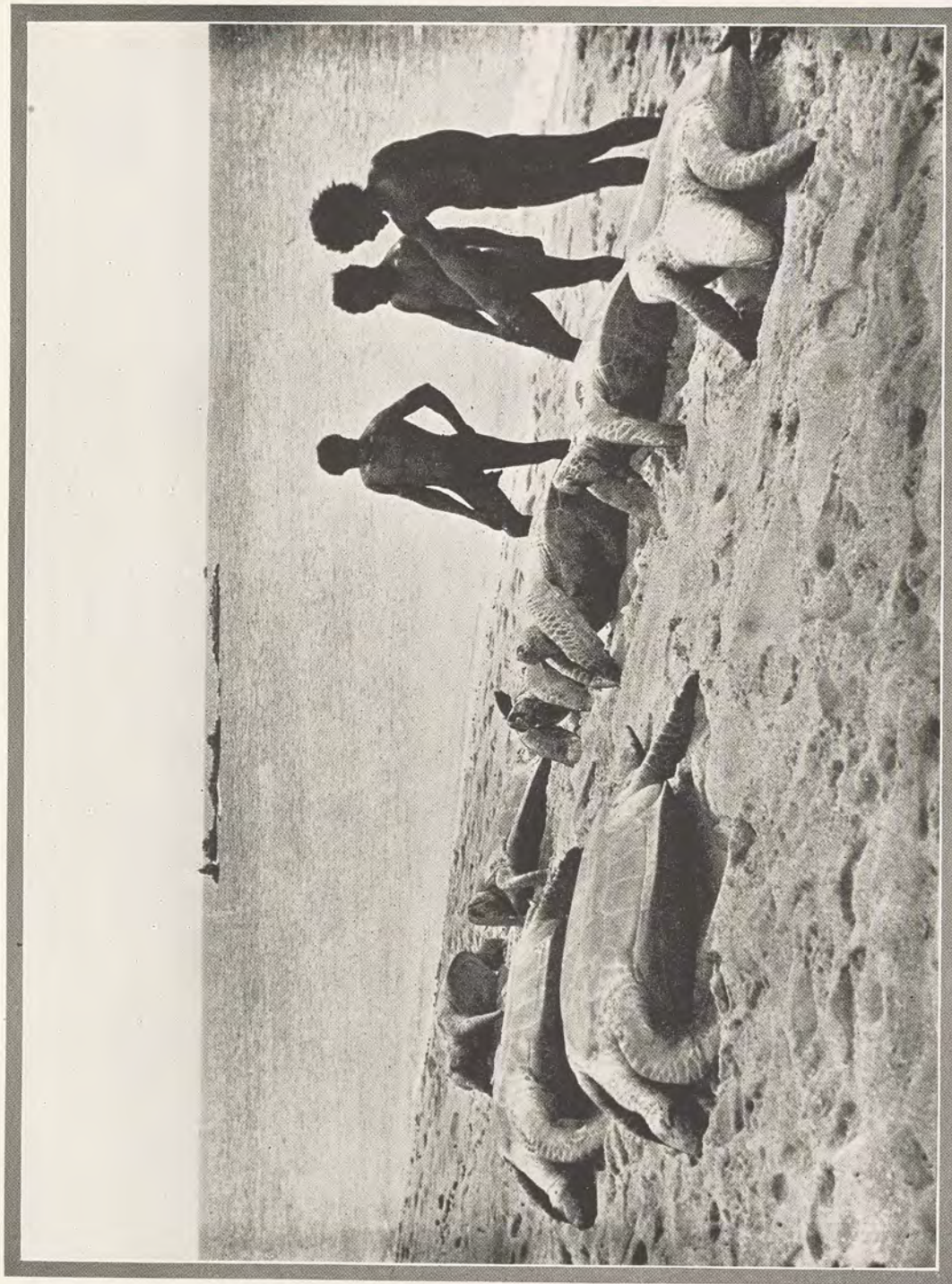
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which phantom figures moved hither and thither and sunbeams pierced their way, falling like long silver pencils from the holes in the roof. Then as the eyes grew accustomed, the pupils expanded upon the strangest scene they had ever looked upon. The phantom forms resolve themselves into hideous furies, hags, and witches, moving about among great heaps of bananas, smoked fish, sago, and feast stuffs—as though they were slaves of Moloch about to raise a sacrifice. These fearful crones are the women of the village, unbeautiful and ugly beyond belief.

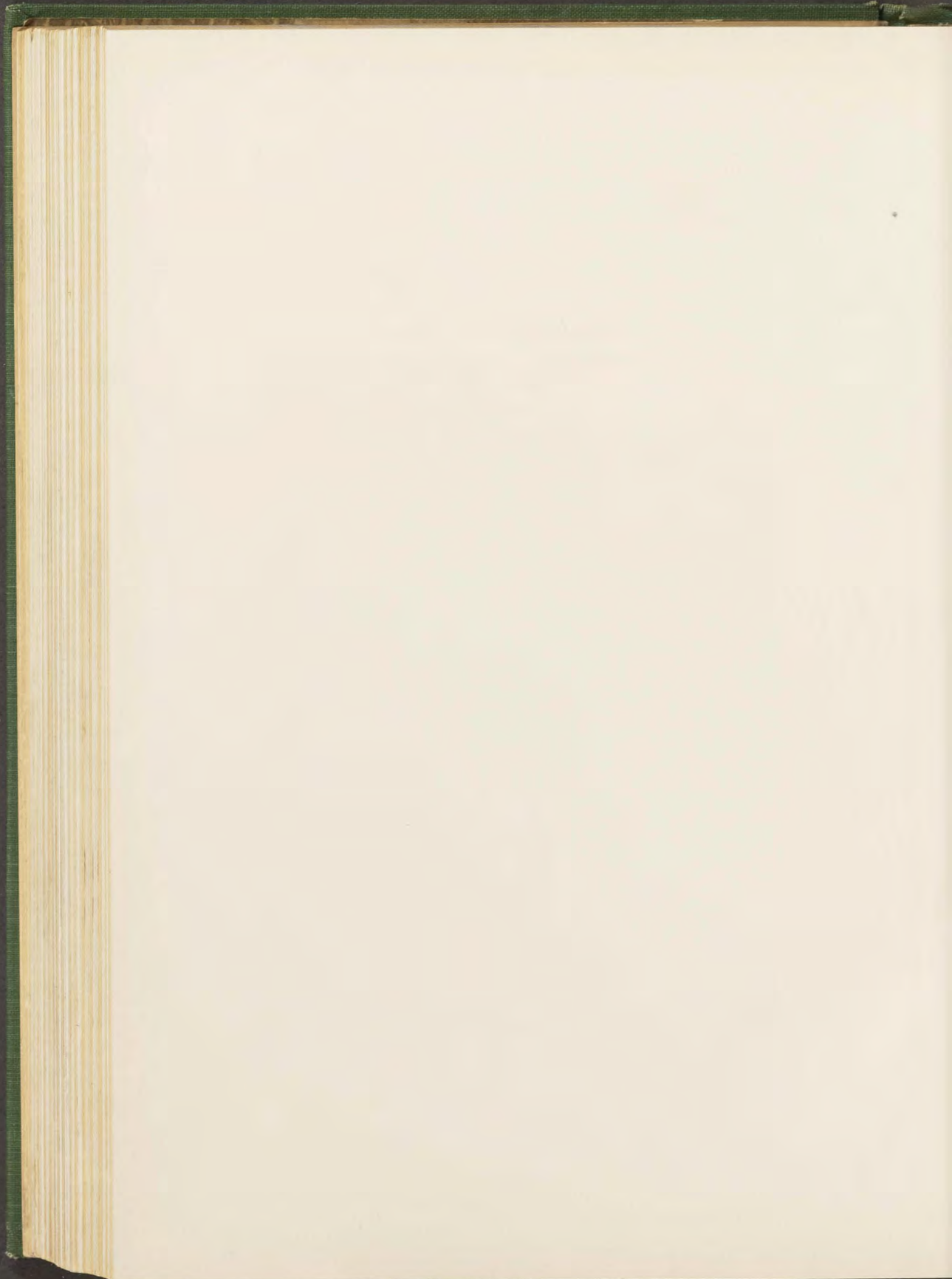
Some time ago, a notable man in the village died, and since then the people have covered themselves with sackcloth and ashes; but the ashes in this case happened to be the ooze of the Fly and the sackcloth garments of teased out grasses which wreathed the unfortunate females in hideous shrouds.

This strange mourning garb is girdled about the body, completely covering the breasts like a corselet. It clasps the waist and then falls down in long tresses behind. In addition to this, the horrible aspect is increased by caps which fit the head closely and flow away in a profusion of combed out fibre which falls behind to mingle with the grass train of the mourning garment. As if these encumbrances were not sufficient, their bodies were heavily bedaubed with the mud of the Fly. I pitied these wretched moving bundles of grass and mud, for the heat was well nigh unbearable and I learned that they had been wearing this shroud of penance for a whole season!

Down the long gloomy corridor McCulloch and I trod, those about us scarce heeding, for they were busy with the preparations of the feast and nothing else mattered. For seventy yards we walked, pacing the great length and marveling at what we saw. Such a scene have I beheld only among the poor of old Jerusalem where poverty treads through dark-



THREE MEMBERS OF THE *Eureka's* CREW WITH A FINE HAUL OF TURTLES ON THE BEACH OF BRAMBLE CAY, A CORAL ISLET OF TORRES STRAITS. THESE REPTILES ABOUND IN THE TEPID WATERS AND ARE CAPTURED WHEN THEY COME ASHORE TO LAY THEIR EGGS



UP A TROPIC RIVER INTO THE UNKNOWN

ened alleyways with the primitive wares and food hanging on either wall. In this great house, families dwell all on one common floor with neither privacy nor wall between them. Truly, indeed, it is a communal house, where all dwell together in peaceful and happy harmony. Amid the bustle and gloom of this market-like corridor we moved between the grass encumbered forms, peering into strange corners, examining native artifices and craft and seeing wonder in all that was commonplace. To record all this that no civilized being has previously seen would be the realization of a dream, yet it seems beyond lens and pen. The day and its scenes can only be a great memory.

Much that we examined of the crafts of the natives show them to have attained to a fair stage of development. Their ba ketwork is unexcelled throughout the Territory and shows conspicuous originality in ornament and design. The fishing nets and hoop nets are admirable handicraft and as for the canoes, they hold first place on Papuan waterways.

The people gave us much assistance and submitted to a process that to them must have seemed a meaningless mystery, in return for no other reward than half a stick of ku-ku per exposure.

The anchorage off the village of Aduru with the full moon silvering the ripples that swished across the mudbanks was a scene of dreamy enchantment. As we sat on our benzine cases, around the cabin's low hood that answers for a table, with the moon's soft light falling over the Fly, we thought that never had we seen the great river under better conditions. When morning broke it was to find ourselves squatting fairly in the centre of a great mudbank and the water of the river so diminished that I scarcely believed it was the same stream. The fall at spring tides must be fully twelve feet. When the tide does change the waters rush in and in the space

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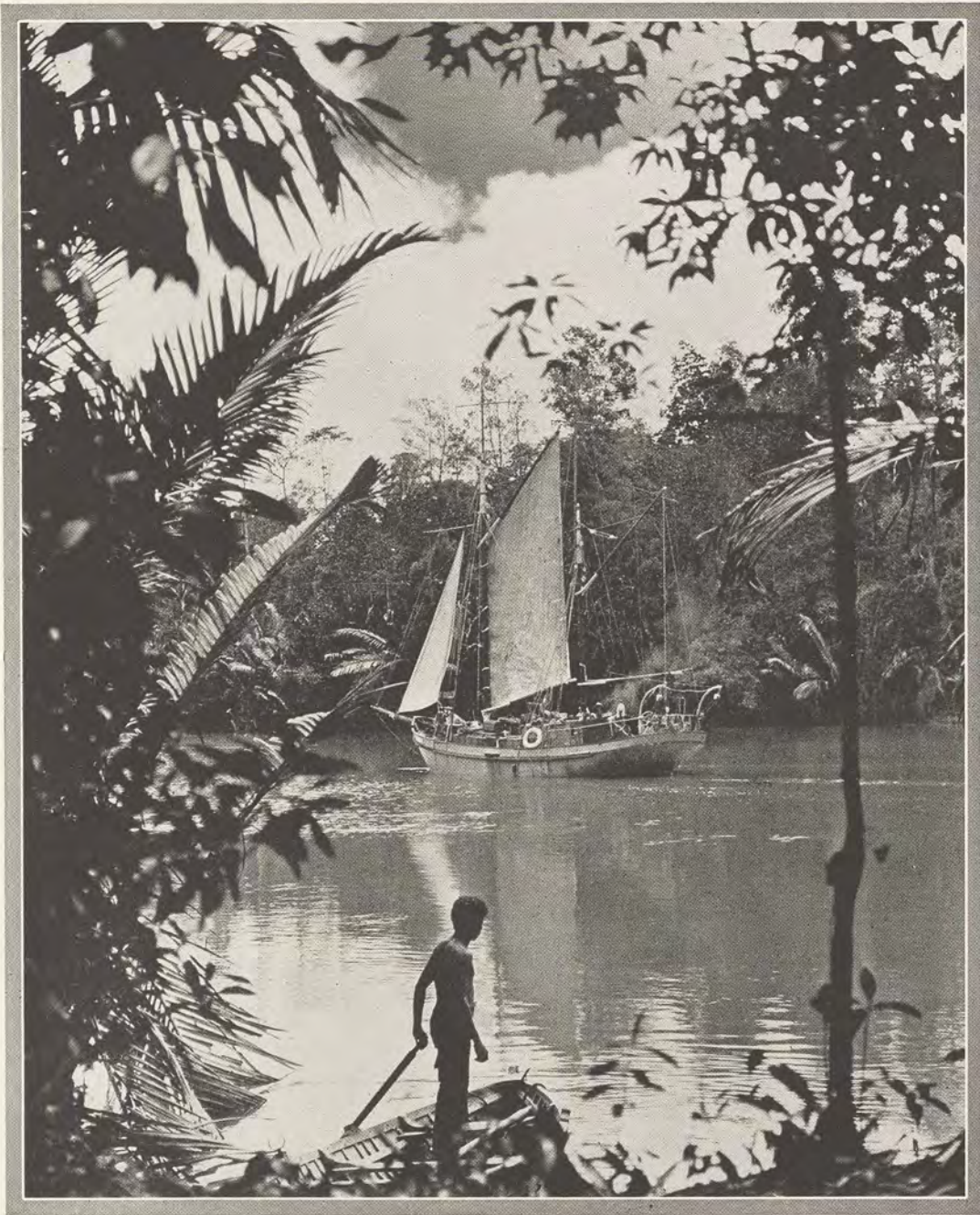
of thirty minutes mudbanks and shallows have all disappeared and the river returns to normal appearance.

The chief game of the small boys seems to be the fun of splashing each other with mud, for each morning they collect on the flat in front of the village and engage in the strange pastime. The low level of the water did not permit of us going ashore, owing to the deep field of mud around us and it was not until eleven thirty A.M. that the waters rose sufficiently to float the dinghy. As the weather was bright and sunny I did not lose the opportunity and forthwith McCulloch, self and three of the natives went ashore.

I was chagrined to find that the Naiades of the Fly (the witches with the grass raiment) of whom I wrote yesterday had thrown off their grass encumbrances and were now even more ugly than when wreathed by their fantastic garb. I ascertained that the great collections of food which had been made in the communal house were for a feast, which took place during the day or early morning, and that it "celebrated" the cutting off of the mourning raiment, which was burnt immediately. However, we managed to discover a couple of the older hags still in their weeds and induced them to be photographed, which I did with fervour. I gave two sticks—a wealthy payment—of good trade tobacco to each one I photographed and it was not long before all the females in the village turned out. The whole grass raiment suggests a grass widow, very much run to grass. In fact, were it not for the glimpse of the face, feet and hands, the woman might be mistaken for a moving grass sheaf.

Another item of interest was the smoking. These people had the most original method of inhaling, gasping and coughing I have seen. Doubtless the practice has something to commend it, for they would sell or barter their very souls for ku-ku.

Firstly, the tobacco is shredded and dried by holding an



THE *Eureka* AMID THE FANTASTIC BEAUTY OF THE LOWER FLY. THE COLOURING OF SUCH A SCENE
DEFIES DESCRIPTION; YET AFTER A TIME SO MUCH BEAUTY BECAME MONOTONOUS, PERHAPS
BECAUSE THERE PERMEATED ALL THE WORLD OF THE DELTA A TROPIC MIASMA OF
DEATH AND DECAY



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ember close above it; the cigarette is then rolled, a leaf being used in lieu of paper, which is then inserted in a long bamboo holder and the lighted end is placed in the mouth. The vigorous exhaling of the breath blows the smoke out of the open end of the holder which is at once inserted in the hole of the smoke reservoir made from a section of bamboo. This exhaling is continued until the smoke issues freely from a second hole in the reservoir. This latter is then passed around, and the inhaling is done by merely drawing the smoke from either of the reservoir holes. It seems to be a very roundabout way to enjoy the fragrant weed, but I doubt not the merits of a cool smoke and being able to fill the lungs to full capacity with a single whiff has some compensations for the trouble. Two or three deep inhalations appear ample to produce a sense of dopiness and to the uninitiated, suffocation.

Januaru 10th.—It is one hundred and fifty miles to Lake Murray with a strong current against us all the way. To-day's run has been particularly beautiful. The river banks now are like wondrous drop scenes or stage settings. Mammoth trees overwhelmed by vines and carrying great burdens of orchids and countless epiphyte growths wall in the stream. It is difficult to ascertain frequently where the trees begin and the vines leave off.

As the coral reef is a fierce marine battlefield where a relentless war in the desperate struggle for life rages unceasingly, so was the luxuriant tropical jungle that stretched around us; each plant, tree and vine striving for a chance to live and bring forth its seed. Great trees formed the hosts for countless parasitic growths which flourished so profusely as to completely hide the form of the parent tree. Other mammoths staggered and bent under a mighty overburden of vines that slowly strangled and smothered them to death. Amid this

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relentless battle of the forests dwelt an equally profuse warring insect and animal life.

Over the calm waters, lit by the blaze of an equatorial sun, myriads of horseflies and butterflies danced. Birds of Paradise, hornbills, Goura pigeons and other dazzling flocks of gorgeous plumage flew overhead or sang amid the vines.

We then entered the pass among the D'Albertis Islands, which was by far the most beautiful scene we have yet witnessed on the Fly. The waters of the Fly ramify in a number of narrow passages, flowing between islands of emerald loveliness. The endless range of greens and browns with patches of bright red young foliage and the chocolate browns of the dying, the dun-coloured waters, reflecting the gaiety of the scene; the liquid avenues, hemmed and walled by luxuriant growths, the blue cloudless sky, the birds, the purling of the peaceful rivers;—all these awakened soulful feelings that made one sense fully the joy of being alive and the privilege of seeing all these wonders.

January 11th.—While the grinding of the engine valves was going on, we rowed ashore and wandered through the dense forest, having to cut a path the whole time. The foliage of palm vines and great trees covered with staghorn and orchids was beyond my æsthetic expression. The cool of the green gloom was extremely grateful after the fierce sun of the river. Of birds there were plenty, but they concealed themselves in the dense masses of foliage and though we could hear them they were extremely difficult to shoot. Even when shot the birds fell into the dense undergrowth so that it took much searching to find them and we lost many specimens this way. The barbed spines of the lawyer vine were a constant menace, but these could be avoided while the mosquitoes could not. Forcing through the undergrowth, one could rest assured that

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swarms of green ants would be ready to attack, and though McCulloch informs me they are perfectly harmless, they are distinctly irritating and unpleasant. The riverbank mud is exceptionally affectionate and clings to one's feet like a most determined lover. I was rather pleased to return to the *Eureka* and as we anchor well out in the stream we are away from most flying parasites.

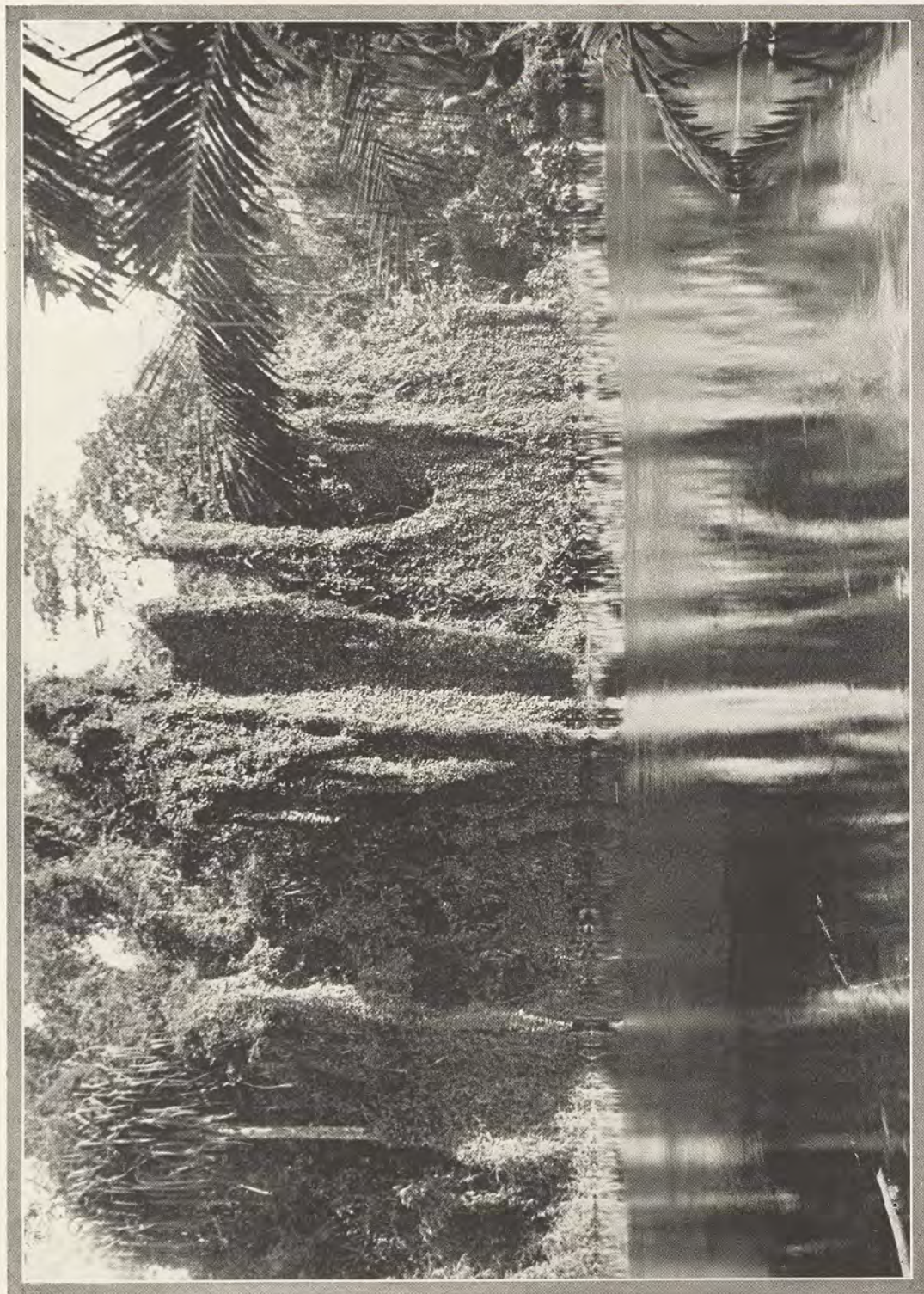
It was four-fifteen P.M. before the engine was ready and with deep relief we heaved up the anchor and went ahead. We now appear to be above the influence of the tides for all day and night the current has been against our bow.

Large quantities of driftwood, logs and occasionally whole trees go floating past and in order to avoid our anchor being carried away and the vessel with it, I have instigated watches throughout the night; further we are now in hostile country and have to keep alert the whole time to avoid surprise by natives or villages. We have seen nothing; nothing beyond point after point of the illimitable jungle. Always one wonders what lies beyond the distant point, and as we proceed, the prospect opens to another point just beyond; nor is there hill nor rise of any description, yet about it all there is an absorbing fascination and the knowledge that there is a goal of mystery and a planned objective that must be achieved. Every mile draws us towards this realization; and so we look forward. We dropped anchor in the starlit waters by the northern extremity of Alligator Island and began our first vigil on the Fly.

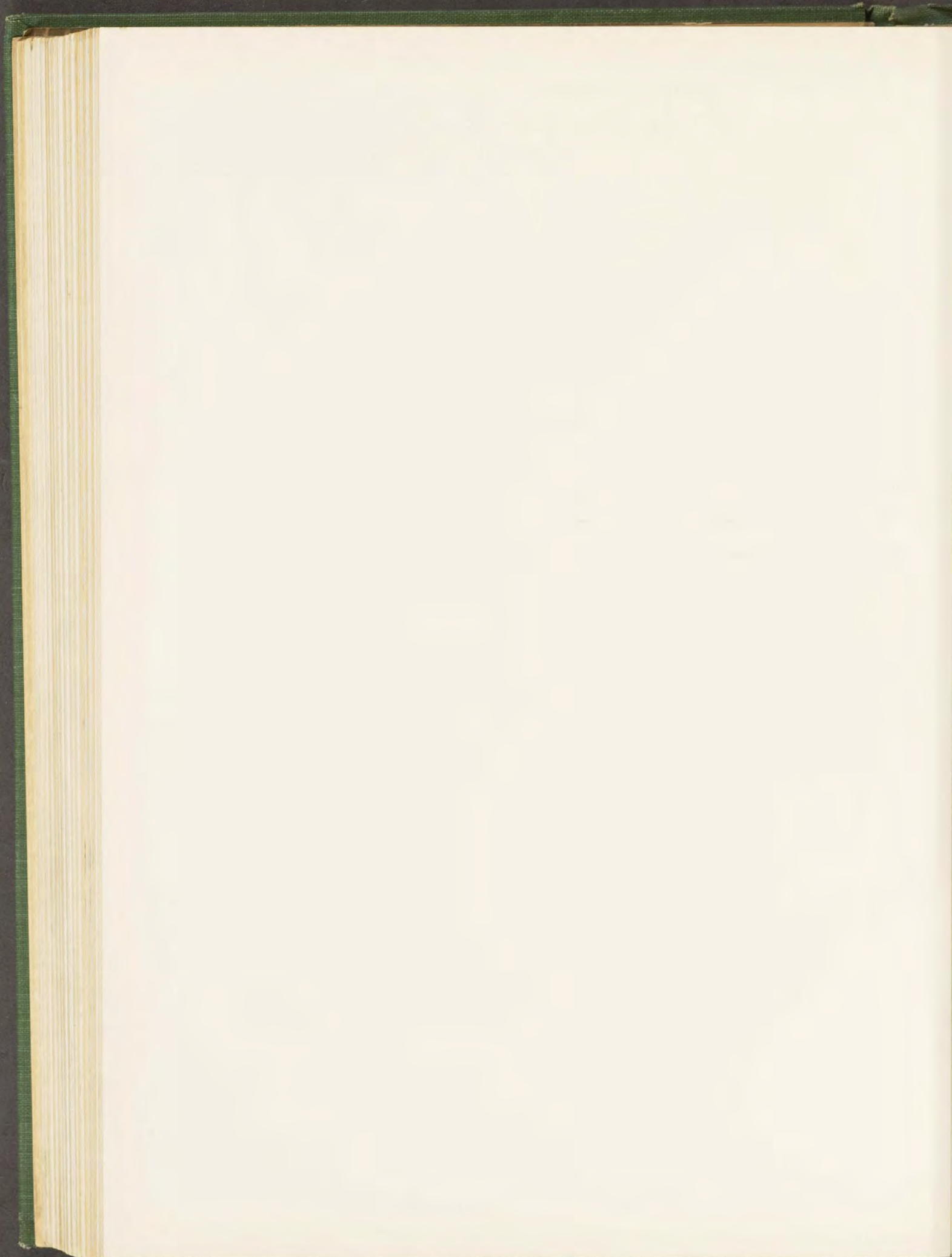
January 12th.—The river scenery during the day has surpassed even the beauty of yesterday. Especially was this so near what is called Cassowary Island. The river banks at this place were reminiscent of old castles and ruins covered with vines. The entire trees were overwhelmed by cascades and festoons of marvellous creepers making many fanciful forms

The impenetrable jungle is wreathed and garlanded by countless varieties of orchids and parasitic vines, in which the paradise bird, the most beautiful of all flying creatures has its home, flitting in and out like vitalized sudden beams of sunlight.

At this spot on the Fly the jungle wall was hung with masses of D'Albertis creeper which exists in three varieties marked respectively by scarlet, orange and mauve blossoms. In the period of full bloom the vines are a solid mass of colour and splotch the jungle walls with the superb pigments which Gauguin used in his pictures of the Marquesas. Scores of lagoons extend into the swamps on either side of the Fly, each walled by similar glorious tapestries of living blossoms. It is a sight which defies all power of description.



THE FANTASTIC WALL OF TROPIC SPLENDOUR WHICH SHUTS IN THE MUDDY FLY FROM ITS MOUTH TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LAKE MURRAY
TWO HUNDRED MILES INLAND



PEARLS AND SAVAGES

and outlines. From tree crest to waterline these amazing growths pended, waving gracefully in the breeze. We seemed to have entered a region of fairy castles, where beauty slept everywhere and only the droning purr of our exhaust broke the enchantment. The fairies that inhabit these vine-clad walls are flocks of feathery beauty and gorgeous plumage.

Among this extravagant verdure, dwells the Paradise bird, the most beautiful creature that skims through the skies. Occasionally one can discern them as they pass from bower to bower. For a brief moment they glint and flash out into the sunshine, then careen back to the gloom of the jungle, which thrills with their characteristic notes.

Passing by Cassowary Island we observed an immense camp of flying foxes. For a whole mile we passed by trees from which countless myriads perched or rather hung in the strange custom that flying foxes have. I noticed them alighting, which they do in a very singular manner. They perch like birds, then as the wings are closed, gravitation comes into action and over they go, pending from the branches head down. As the weather was bright and hot these ugly creatures maintained a slow motion with their folded wings, idly fanning themselves to keep cool!

A few shots from my rifle awakened and startled the flock so that they took to wing. The sky became alive with flying foxes which whirled and flew in great clouds above their camping place. After passing Cassowary Island and midway to Ellangowan Island, the river banks are heavily fringed with tall reeds, the effect reminding me very much of stretches on the Nepean River in Australia.

The Fly at this point is about six hundred to seven hundred yards wide and five to six fathoms deep in the channel. This would be about one hundred and fifty miles from the mouth. The river runs deep and smoothly. Turgid, nevertheless, with

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

mud and always in a constant oily agitation. Charts there are none, and the rough Government map from which we are working is very inaccurate, and the river wants accurate surveying.

All this while, now for over one hundred miles, we have not seen a single native nor canoe. The first sign of human agency was this afternoon when we observed a distant smoke column ascending to the skies; but the people we never saw. Late in the afternoon we rounded a river bend and turned due west, into the face of the setting sun. The colouration I am helpless to describe. The sky was barred in the west by banks of rose and madder clouds, floating on a brilliant blue background of sky. Every moment the clouds changed, flaming and flaring like a fire, then gradually fading out to the dark shades of night, which fell like a drop curtain on scenes of amazing glory and beauty. The river like a mighty gilded mirror reflected the sublime wonder of the sky. At intervals it appeared a vast lake of liquid opal, flashing, changing, iridescent, as the altering scheme of the skies decreed.

Then night fell and a great silence swallowed all our world. Silently round the bend glides the river, carrying its waters from the far ranges through lands pregnant with mystery, lure and enchantment. The stars dance out to light the world, and the fairies light up the trees along the banks with fireflies. They come and go across the great silver waters on the backs of fireflies, and all above the water is busy with traffic; the great river reflects even the lights from their tiny chariots until all the air resembles a miniature meteoric shower.

You could expect anything to come from out the gloom of the trees; the deep darkness seems to hide head-hunters and wild men and I doubt not that they are staring at us even now. The atmosphere is sweet-scented with flowers that exhale their perfume as the sun falls low. Then the fairies tune up their chorus and the goblin frogs croak, and the crickets "bas-



WIDOWS OF ADURU CLAD IN THE RIVER MUD AND GRASS SKIRTS OF MOURNING. THEY WERE TERRIFIED AND SHY AND COULD ONLY BE INDUCED TO POSE AT THE COMMAND OF THE VILLAGE CHIEF. EVEN THEN, THEY SHOOK AND TREMBLED WITH TERROR AT THE SIGHT OF THAT UNKNOWN MONSTER, THE CAMERA. AT THE WINDOW AT THE TOP OF THE CRUDE STAIRS APPEARS A MORE FORTUNATE FEMALE OF THE TRIBE WHO, OVERCOME BY CURIOSITY, CAME SHYLY TO THE WINDOW TO WATCH THE OPERATIONS. THESE CREATURES ARE SO FILTHY AND HIDEOUS THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THEM HUMAN



UP A TROPIC RIVER INTO THE UNKNOWN

soon," while the mosquitoes shriek. It is the strange melody of tropic nights which they sing until the dawn when the birds trill a gladsome song to the newborn day. The silhouette of our bark rides motionless on deep waters where the stars dance and the moon's quarter floats. Only the purling of the current against the stem tells that the water moves. The ship sleeps. She rests like a dream vessel on the waters of Lethe. Morpheus has taken the wheel and all slumber save myself and Dogai, who keeps midnight vigil.

The mosquitoes are extremely bad. In the cabin where I write the air is heavy with volatile; but the brutes seem to like the pungent smell.

January 13th.—Midnight on watch near Everill Junction. The system of watches is now in running order:

McCulloch and Ivoni take from	8 to 12 midnight.
Self and Dogai	" " 12 to 4 A.M.
Bell and Jack	" " 4 A.M. to 6 A.M.

when the coxswain and cook are called and the anchor heaved up and we get under way. We continue all day until darkness renders travel on an unexplored river unsafe on account of drift logs and silt banks. All native hands turn to and pump the ship dry, wash decks and tidy things up before breakfast which is at eight A.M. Then there are only odd jobs to do during the rest of the day. Bell is busy watching the engine and oiling up. The half-caste Jack is busily engaged as usual tidying up after me, putting tools by and waiting on the engineer. McCulloch collects what he can, which comes aboard—flying insects, butterflies, dragon flies, etc. I do sundry mechanical jobs and repairs. Vaieki, coxswain, steers turns with the other boys and keeps a lookout, and our estimable cookie is ever busy.

PEARLS AND SAVAGES

1.30 a. m. (13th).—The moon has just peeped over the river bank. A frayed out old moon in the final stages of decay before she goes altogether and is reborn. It is very quiet save for the deep breathing of the sleepers. The purl of the current sweeping past our stem and anchor chain, and the squeak of crickets, and an occasional night bird ashore. The day has been thoroughly interesting. We have been following the course from the chart as closely as possible and find it full of inaccuracies.

The vegetation was not so prolific nor luxuriant along the river banks as before. Occasional patches of great fertility and tangle were encountered, but for a large part the banks were covered with a weedy looking fresh water mangrove and reeds. From the mast top I could look over the top of the reeds onto vast areas of flat grass-covered land, much like areas of Western Queensland and doubtless good grazing land. These plain-like stretches were quite devoid of trees and a strange sight to look upon in contrast to the dense jungle that we have observed day after day.

The reeds that face the river front grow to ten feet in height and form an almost impenetrable barrier. The river banks too have grown somewhat higher and the country appears as though it had less of rain.

We are only a few miles from the junction of the Fly and Strickland rivers and the waterway is six hundred to seven hundred yards wide—though it swells out in places, five to six fathoms deep and flows at a steady two knots, increasing in volume and current with each cloudburst at the rivers' source in the unknown country lying before us. These, judging by the wet banks and large quantities of stranded timbers are of very frequent occurrence.

The navigation of the river is to our small draught vessel very simple and were it not for the siltbanks in the estuary the river would be navigable for large-sized vessels.



A FAMILY "CUBICLE" FROM THE COMMUNISTIC LONG HOUSE AT ADURU. HERE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY SHARES A SINGLE VAST ROOM,
SEPARATED ONLY BY STICKS OF BAMBOO AND ACCUMULATIONS OF NETS, FISHING IMPLEMENTS AND OTHER PARAPHERNALIA



UP A TROPIC RIVER INTO THE UNKNOWN

January 14th.—We entered the Strickland at ten forty-five A.M. at what is known as Everill Junction. An unimpressive locality among low flat banks covered with reeds and stunted trees. The Strickland itself we found an immense river scarcely less wide than the Fly and the current swifter. The river is much more circuitous, especially near its entry into the Fly. Here we followed the course for hours and at the end were only two miles north of the starting point, the river having described a complete horseshoe with the extremities drawn close together. The vegetation—trees and vines—is not nearly so luxuriant as that through which we passed, the river banks being heavily over-grown with rank grasses and tall green reeds up to twelve feet in height. These lend to the river a very charming prospect of rolling green banks and the artificial adornment of a well-kept garden. There was little of interest beyond an occasional crocodile or a bright-coloured shrub or tree in blossom—even the most beautiful of scenes and things become wearisome if one sees too much of them.

Anchor was dropped in a lee of the main stream as soon as darkness drew on and McCulloch and I with two natives went ashore in the dinghy. We found it extremely difficult to row against the stream and near the bank the current swept us back. We succeeded in reaching the slack water of a small point and so got ashore. The undergrowth at this point was very heavy and though many birds were about, it was impossible to locate them in the gloom. McCulloch shot a bird of Paradise, but the wounded bird managed to escape in the tangle and could not be located though we searched for an hour. We were expelled from the place by mosquitoes and ants which attacked us in clouds and swarms. During the night's watch the mosquito myriads were a torment and an agony. The natives had a particularly bad time and gained no sleep whatsoever. Even my friend "Buzzoff" was futile

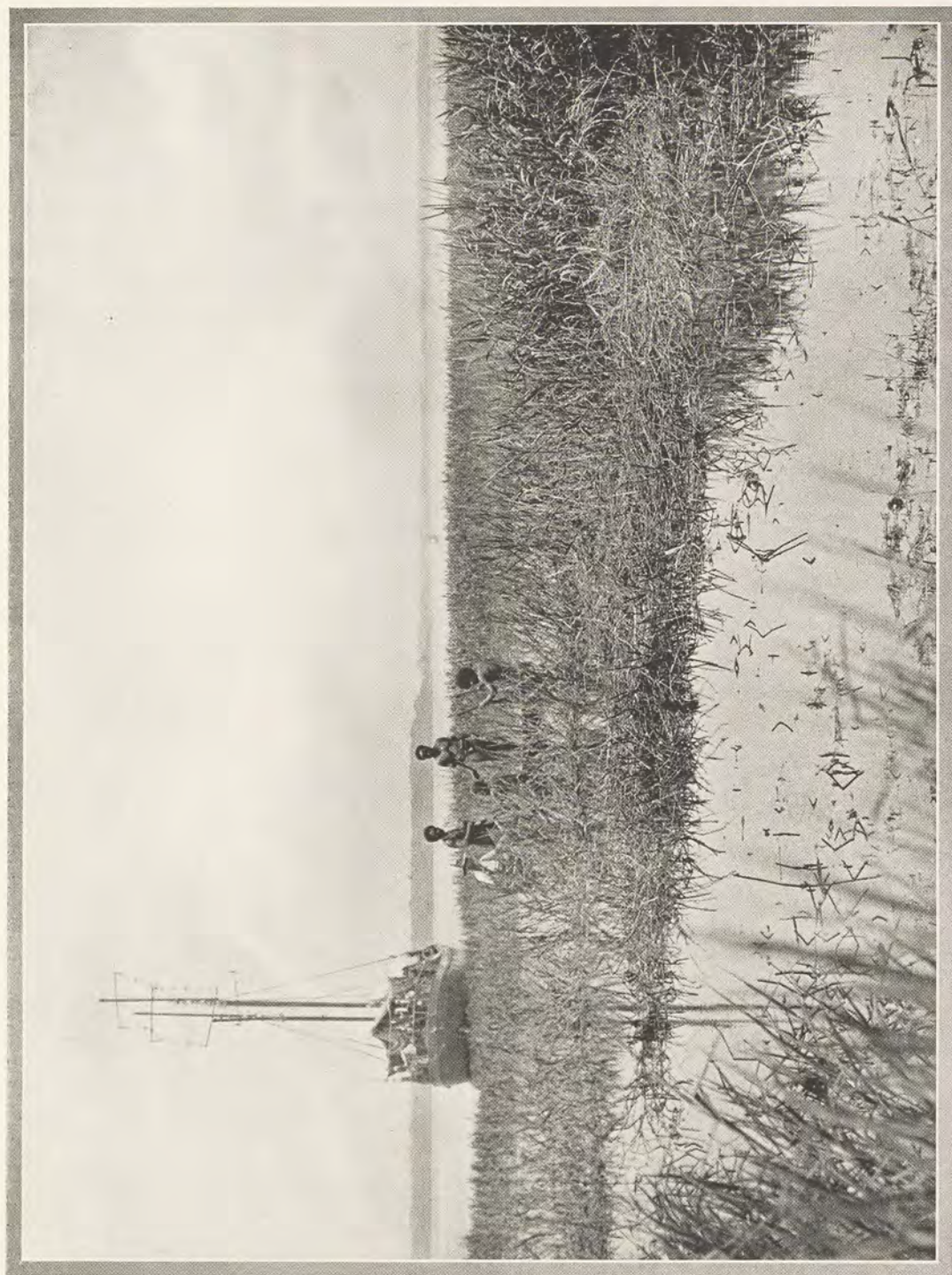
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after a few minutes and the terrible bloodthirsty parasites became thicker than ever. Even beneath the net they found a way, and when my watch was over, I found that to sleep was quite out of consideration. Had Dante known of mosquitoes he certainly would have added them to the torments of Inferno.

January 15th.—I made this entry under very harassing conditions. The mosquitoes are hell and though I have wrapped several thicknesses of blanket around my legs and feet and donned a heavy "puncture proof" water-proof and doused my hands and face with "Buzzoff," it is all to no effect. We made the natives a mosquito-proof house from one of the nets. They, excepting Dogai who keeps watch with me, are all inside, but the mosquitoes seem to be busy within, judging by the continual slapping and smacking. There is great satisfaction in watching one of these parasites alight on the hand and as soon as he has begun his meal to slowly crush him under pressure. Many thousands of mosquitoes have thus died by our hands. I too am terribly weary and tired, but a watch must be kept as we are now close to the haunts of enemies and relaxation might result in the destruction of the whole party.

All day we have been forcing the passage of the Strickland, navigating as far as possible in the lee side of points and bends and thus avoiding a great percentage of the current. As before the banks are highly grown with margins of tall reeds and are quite inaccessible, excepting in gaps.

At three P.M. we entered the Herbert River, quite an unobtrusive stream which is the outlet of Lake Murray. The great Strickland continued on, unabated in width or volume. Thus it continues for another one hundred and fifty miles until the first rapids appear, but it is still another one hundred before the mountains are reached.



A TYPICAL VIEW OF LAKE MURRAY WITH THE *Eureka*, THE AUTHOR AND PART OF THE NATIVE CREW IN THE FOREGROUND. THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WATER IN THIS SWAMPY LAKE SELDOM FELL BELOW NINETY DEGREES AND EVERY NIGHT BROUGHT A TROPICAL THUNDERSTORM



UP A TROPIC RIVER INTO THE UNKNOWN

The river meanders across the great grass-covered flats and jungle patches, which in the wet season must be merely immense swamps.

I found the Herbert River very entertaining, much similar scenically to the Strickland, but the narrow width added to its beauty and its resemblance to an artificial canal. During the late afternoon McCulloch and self and three natives went ashore to gather wood for the cook. While the boys were so engaged, I went bird shooting, while McCulloch collected butterflies and insects which were in great profusion.

We are now anchored in the deep waters of the Herbert River and on the very threshold of Lake Murray. We all look with excitement to the meeting with strange people about whom we have heard such distorted and fabulous rumours. For two hundred miles we have passed up the river and I have seen no village save Aduru and no traces of natives save for a pair of abandoned canoes. One might readily imagine that the whole place was depopulated. I fancy, however, that there are villages in some distance from the rivers and swamps, where they would be to some extent away from the mosquitoes.

January 16th.—We continued passing up the course of the Herbert, which the map shows to be merely a straight waterway draining Lake Murray, but which is in reality very serpentine. The river is from one to three hundred yards in width and from three to six fathoms in depth. Altogether it is a remarkable stream with waters clear in comparison to those of the Fly and Strickland and much slower in flow. I should estimate the current at not more than a mile per hour. The banks are laid out by nature like an artificial watercourse, with low grass at the water's edge, then tall reeds and lastly the background of trees, vines and other verdure. Naturally the keenest expectation existed on board as to the nature of the Lake and its strange

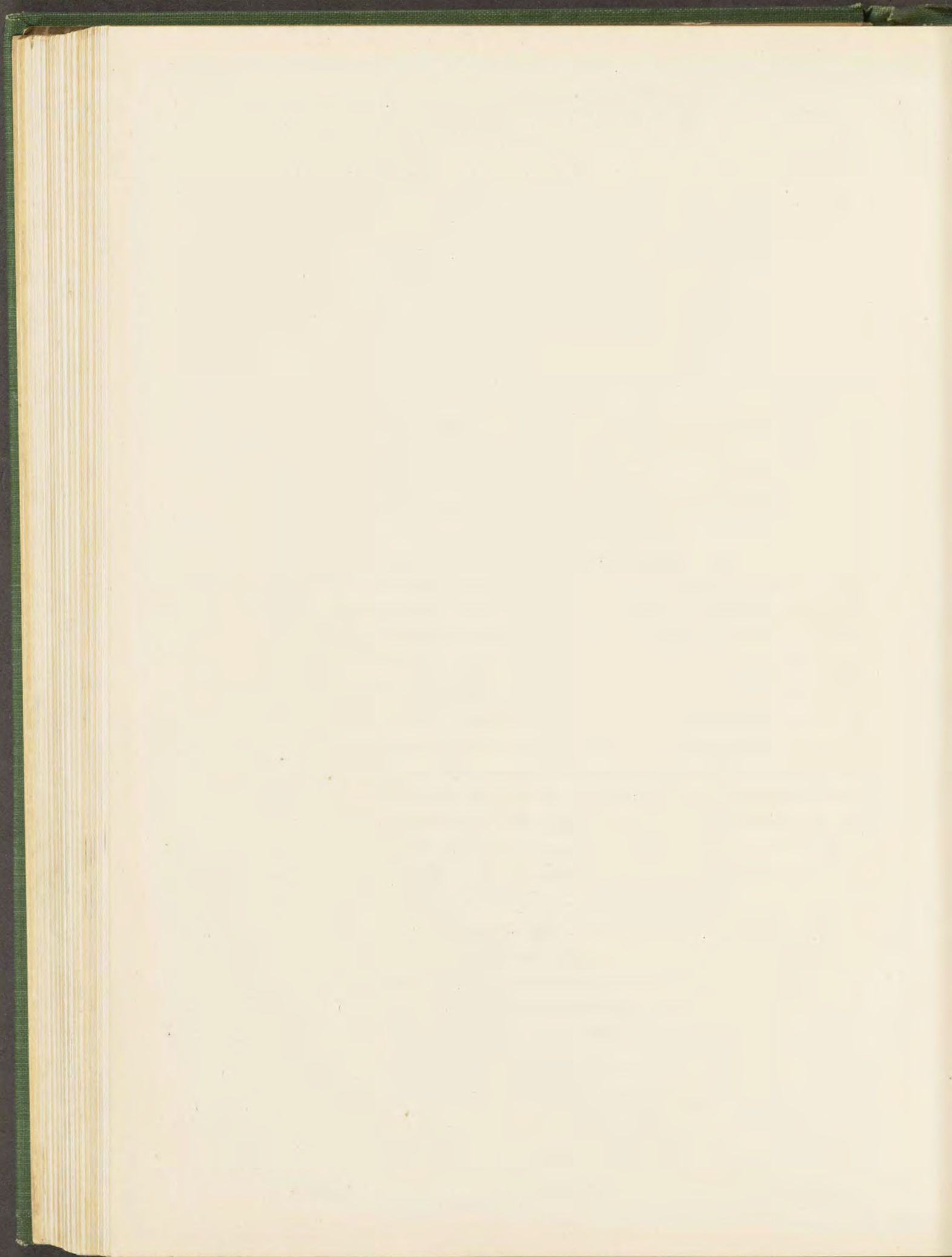
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mysteries about which rumours are so prevalent. McCulloch and I kept a keen lookout from the mainhead, while the natives turned the wheel to our instructions and the crew kept the sounding lead busily engaged the whole time. Then the trees along the banks dwindled away to reeds and then over the top of the swamps we observed the distant ramifying waters of this extraordinary inland sea. We noticed one canoe in the remote distance through the glasses—the first human life seen since leaving Aduru on the Fly estuary, two hundred miles away!

CHAPTER XIII

MEN OUT OF THE STONE AGE

"THE LOST TRIBES" AND THE EMPTY WORLD OF LAKE MURRAY



CHAPTER XIII

1

I DECIDED not to enter the lake by night, knowing nought of its uncharted waters and having been previously informed as to the treachery of the natives. The watch was doubled and a keen look-out maintained against surprise.

Deferred realization retarded the night, which was rendered painfully harassing by myriads of mosquitoes and by numberless swarms of diminutive May flies. These came from the swamps in dense clouds and attracted by the light, found their way into our food, eyes, nostrils and mouths, making breathing well-nigh impossible, so perforce we had to dispense with a light. This plague of diminutive Ephemera has a highly interesting life cycle. The ovum incubates on the surface of the slimy waters and at sundown the tiny moths, rose in countless myriads from the reeds, with the sound like the surf breaking on a distant shore. For one glorious night they lived and laid their microscopic eggs and at the first break of day their dead bodies littered the deck like a powder of snow.

The zephyrs from the south were sweet-laden with the fragrance of flowers, and the starlit dome of heaven strewed the mirror-like waters with scintillation. Across the waters of the lake came the tom-tom of drums; the frogs chorused an

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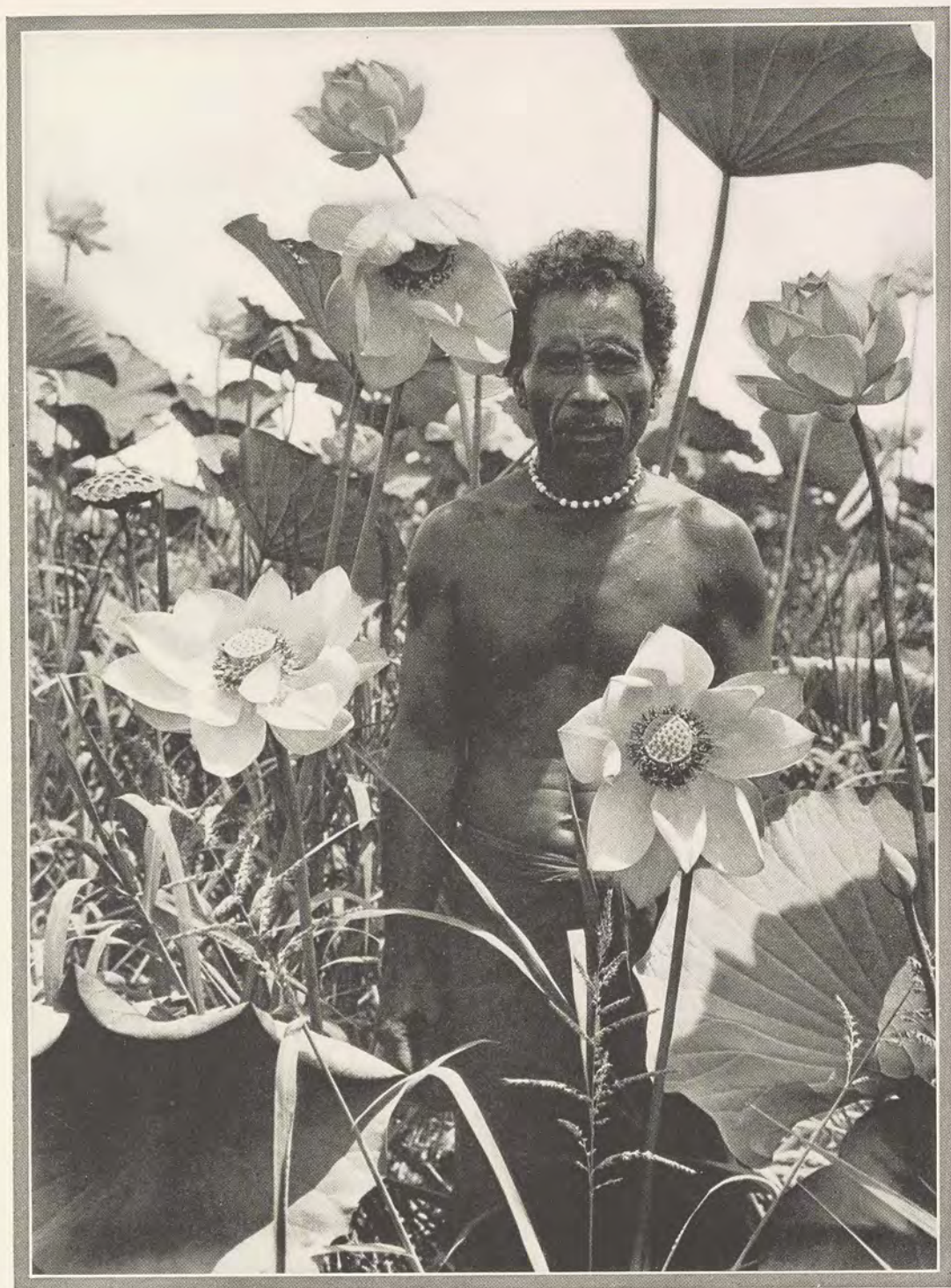
anthem from the swamps, and the eerie cry of night-birds made the air pregnant with mystery and enchantment.

While dawn was kindling the east, all were a-bustle. The anchor was heaved up and the rhythmic cough of our engine stirred the fowl from the marshes and the crocodiles from their lairs. These infested the waters in large numbers, attaining a great length and conjuring in my imagination scenes of primordial days when the mammoth *Brontosaurus* and *Dinosaurus* wallowed in the tepid slime of such a lake.

As the curtain of dawn was raised, from the masthead a wondrous scene unfolded. The pink-flushed river led on to an expansive sheet of gold. Our hopes and dreams were realized, for the goal of our ambitions lay before us. The banks were clothed with vast fields of giant lotus in full bloom, from which flocks of ibis, duck and cormorants took wing. Beyond eye-reach extended verdant flats of marshland, resembling a field of young wheat, swamped by flood waters. It was from these immense beds of lotus that the sweet perfume of last evening exhaled. In the delicate beams of sunrise the whole scene was hospitable and inviting. Our bows were now entering the portals of the lake, and on the very threshold above the surrounding flats rose a low isolated hill, rudely planted, cultivated with coconuts, bananas and sugar cane.

As we drew near, the fantastic outlines of a great house came into view—before us stood the citadel of the head-hunters. The anchor chain rattled out and we came to rest, crying “Sambio! Sambio! Sambio!” the sole word which we knew of the lake-dwellers’ language. “Sambio,” the “sesame” that sheathes the arrow and kindles the calumet. But the only answer to our “Sambios” was the echo that travelled through the deserted house and “came out by the same door as in it went.”

What had become of the people? It was hardly rational



VAIEKI, THE COXSAIN, IN ONE OF THE GIANT FIELDS OF LOTUSES WHICH BORDERED THE SHORES OF LAKE MURRAY. THESE MAMMOTH AND FLAMBOYANTLY LOVELY FLOWERS ARE LIKE ALL THE VEGETATION OF THE DISTRICT . . . EXTRAVAGANT AND INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL. THE BLOSSOMS WERE OF A DELICATE PINK AND MEASURED UP TO FOURTEEN INCHES ACROSS. THE LOTUS IS A NEW SPECIES



MEN OUT OF THE STONE AGE

to surmise that they had vanished without leaving pickets to spy on our movements, or maybe they were hiding in ambush until we came ashore. We remained inert, but for occasional salvos of "Sambios" and flutterings of gaudy-coloured fabrics and axes.

I can only attribute the failure of our golden lure to the exhaust of our engine, which pops away a merry *feu-de-joie*, like a miniature mitrailleuse. I have no doubt that the natives regarded us as offensive invaders, equipped with deadly armament, and were naturally reticent about accepting our "Sambios" and presents merely on their sound and face values. As nothing appeared to be stirring, the *Eureka* was nosed in-shore, as depth allowed, and accompanied by McCulloch and four of the most trusty of my native crew, I went ashore in the dinghy to make our official call. My nervy native body-guard was well armed, though I candidly must admit the quivering barrels behind us two white men presented more of a menace than a flight of arrows.

However, we had made up our minds, and pushed on up the narrow track that led between the tall reeds, expecting momentarily what never happened, until further progress was barred by arrows thrust in the ground and a skull impaled on a pole. This we could scarcely interpret as a hospitable welcome, but as Lake Murray skulls were urgently needed for the Australian Museum collection, McCulloch annexed them, whilst I substituted a green bough, red calico and presents, emblematic of peace. The native guardsmen were placed at strong points to command the village paths whilst we investigated.

2

The village comprised a single immense house, three hundred feet long, fifty feet wide and thirty-five feet high to

This long house, conceived on a grand scale but executed in a manner infinitely more crude than the dwellings of the delta inhabitants stood on a low hill which commanded a wide view of the lake. At the rear extended the jungle into which it was possible for the women and children to vanish instantly and noiselessly in case of attack.

This was exactly what happened at the approach of the *Eureka*. The entire tribe was swallowed up by the jungle, although an occasional rustling of leaves betrayed the presence of a warrior on watch, peering through the jungle wall. For days the house remained deserted and it was not until a short time before the departure of the party for home that natives of the region suddenly appeared in canoes on the lake and were overtaken by the motor-driven *Eureka*.

The view here shows the portico of the house where the chief and the fighting men had their quarters.



A CANNIBALS' STRONGHOLD ON THE BANKS OF LAKE MURRAY



MEN OUT OF THE STONE AGE

the apex of the arched entrance. This building reminded me very much of similar colossal "ravis" of the Purari Delta, with the roof projecting in a tapering snout, symbolizing a crocodile couchant with jaws a-yawn. The ridge-pole projected an additional twelve feet and was split at the end, beak-like, and a human thigh-bone thrust in transversely suggesting the armorial bearings of the tribe.

This informal decoration we greatly admired, so we added it to our bone bag. Apart from the main entrance there were eleven small openings on either side, which led to small cubicles. The entire edifice resembled a ramshackle shearing shed with a sheepy atmosphere of unwashed humanity. The main porch in front of the building was apparently reserved exclusively for the fighting men, whilst the women and children occupied the smaller cubicles.

This amazing communal house was built on a strongly strategic site; the front porch commanding a prospect over the entire lake, while in the event of surprise or defeat, the entire community could melt away into the shadows of the surrounding bamboo thickets, exactly as they had done during our approach.

Instructing the guard to maintain a vigilant patrol and to acquaint us at the first danger sign, we entered and passed within the gloom of the head-hunters' citadel.

The floor of the main portico was divided into rectangles merely by laying down and lashing transversely heavy saplings. Each space was apparently allotted to the fighting males of a family, who slept on the bare ground, coiled close to the smouldering embers to avoid mosquitoes, or squatted on the saplings during the day, grinding their stone axes, fashioning arrow-heads from bones with flint gouges, and chewing betel nut. At convenient points hooked uprights were placed where the bows, arrows, and stone clubs were

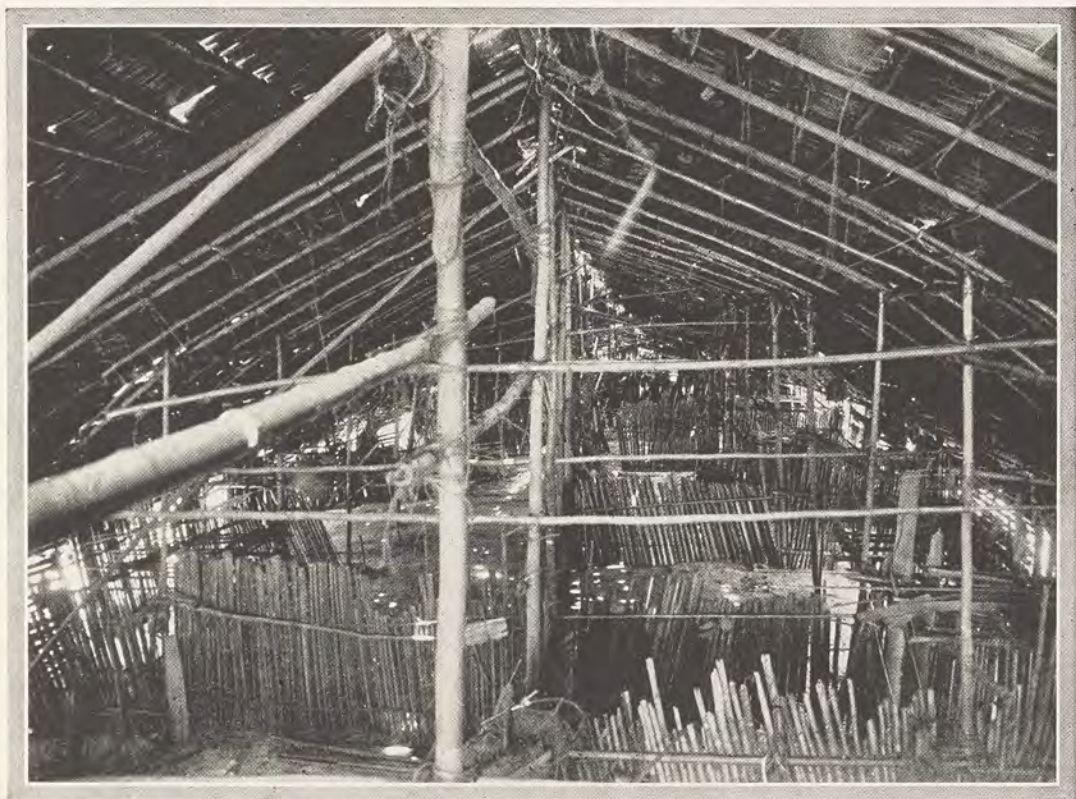
A comparison of architecture in New Guinea.

Above is the men's club house at Kerewa, Goaribari, a community fairly well developed in the primitive arts. This was the longest house seen in Papua. It measured five hundred feet long and was constructed of the inevitable mangrove sticks and thatched with nipa palm leaf. The floor is made of the beaten out logs of the goru palm.

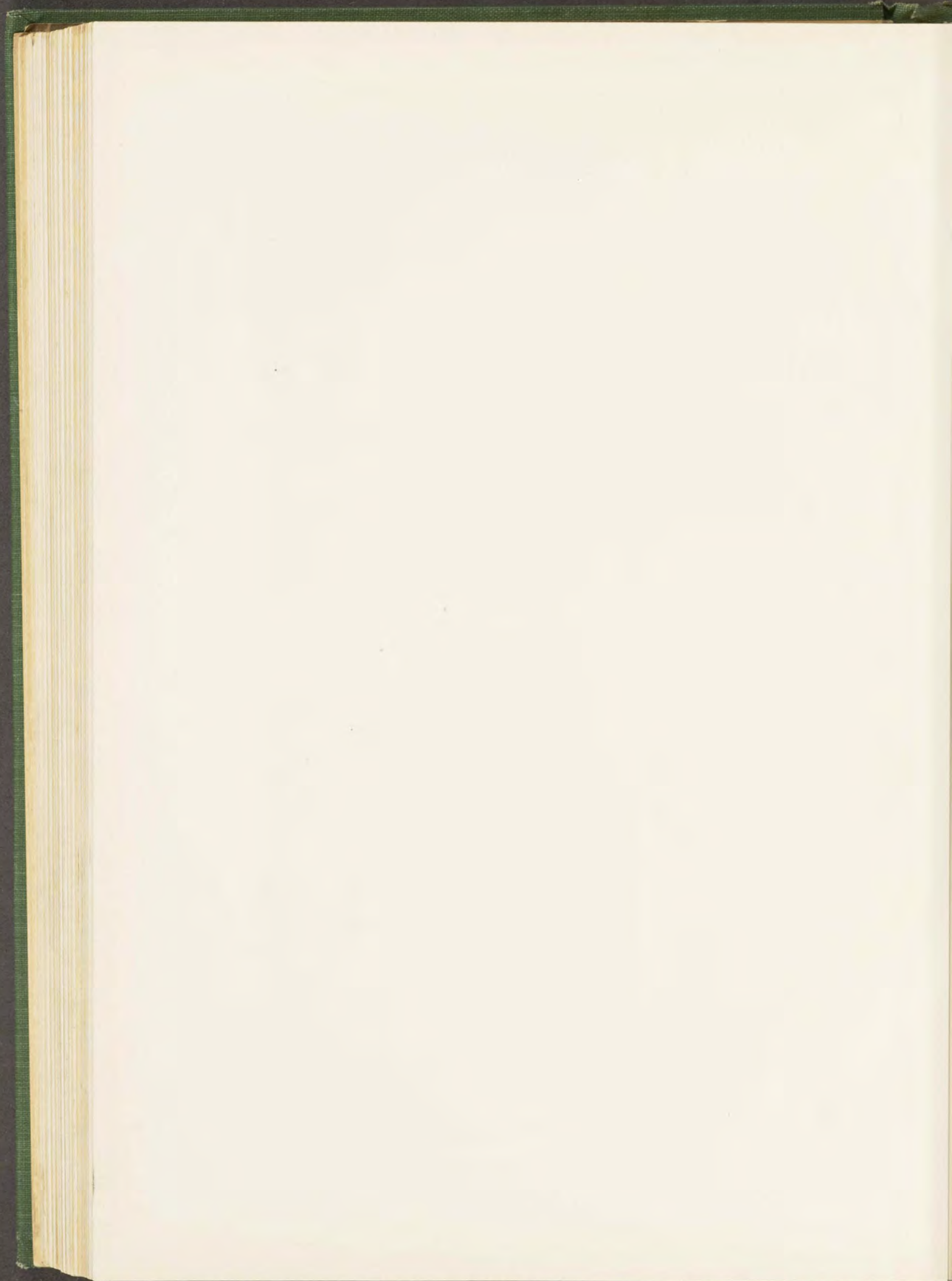
Below is the house of a cannibal tribe on Lake Murray. Here the ramshackle framework is made of bamboo. The roof, carelessly thatched admits the rain, and the only floor is the earth itself. The families reside in walled-off sheep pens made of bamboo. The contrast reveals the remarkable gaps which may exist even among races of the feeblest development.



THE INTERIOR OF THE COMMUNAL LONG HOUSE AT KEREWI



THE HOUSE OF THE LAKE MURRAY VILLAGERS, MOST PRIMITIVE OF ALL NEW GUINEA PEOPLES



MEN OUT OF THE STONE AGE

hung in constant readiness. From the rafters pended gruesome war trophies of human skulls and souvenirs of the chase. Truly it was a model dwelling out of the Stone Age.

The family section was partitioned off from the warriors' den by a high partition made from sago frond stems cunningly lashed together. Climbing up on to the top of this partition we looked down the gloom of this Augean hall, and in the faint light made out the outlines of two rows of dismal pens fenced off by low barriers. Each was provided with a raised platform for sleeping and a small doorway into the open.

Everything was inexpressibly crude and primitive. We had entered the Stygian home of prehistoric swamp-dwellers living by the shores of a primeval sea. In the pens warm embers still remained; the belongings hung from the rafters in countless bags, and, though feeling compunction for our actions, we ransacked them. In the cause of science, McCulloch allows that even an unfair exchange is no robbery; so we collected and exchanged, to the great advantage of the owners and to our supreme satisfaction.

Skulls, human bits, and tit-bits filled our bone-bag; whilst axes, knives and fabrics were substituted. Surely, indeed, Father Christmas had visited the house! Iron and steel replaced bone and stone, and a million years was bridged in a day! To record all the things we found in the bags would be as impossible as listing the countless little treasures and mysteries of my lady's ditty bag.

The grass bag contains a full dress. It is the height of prehistoric fashion—a chic grass mode that begins at the waist and ends at the knees; perhaps in the near future your silk bag will carry a wardrobe, for it seems to-day that the ultra-modern is reverting to the prehistoric! The grass ditty contains less of golden wealth and poverty, and, I doubt not, less of worries, troubles and anxieties that a million years

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has thrust upon us. But, as my friend Mancer would say, we digress, and we will peer into just a few more bags, for we are just as curious, but perhaps less nervous, than you, dear ladies. Here is baby's cradle. Mother just places him within the knitted bag, and suspends him to rock from the nearest pole while she turns a fish in the embers for the evening meal. This large bag—it swarms with earwigs, scorpions, cockroaches, and spiders—contains lots of small grass-plaited pouches.

In each reposes the blade of the Stone Age—a stone axe-head. Hanging beside are the handles. Near by, carefully wrapped in leaf, Paradise bird plumes—a head-hunter's head-dress! Then there are bags of empty mussel shells, used for knives and scrapers; red and yellow ochre, for decorative purposes; stabbing daggers of keen-edged bamboo, and terrible arrow points, barbed and cut in murderous fashion. Some bags contain grass skirts, others bits of wood, charms, seeds, and bush herbs—the purposes of which we know not.

Thus we went the round of the bags, carefully selecting our choices, and always replacing the theft with presents of axes and knives and articles likely to be of perpetual use.

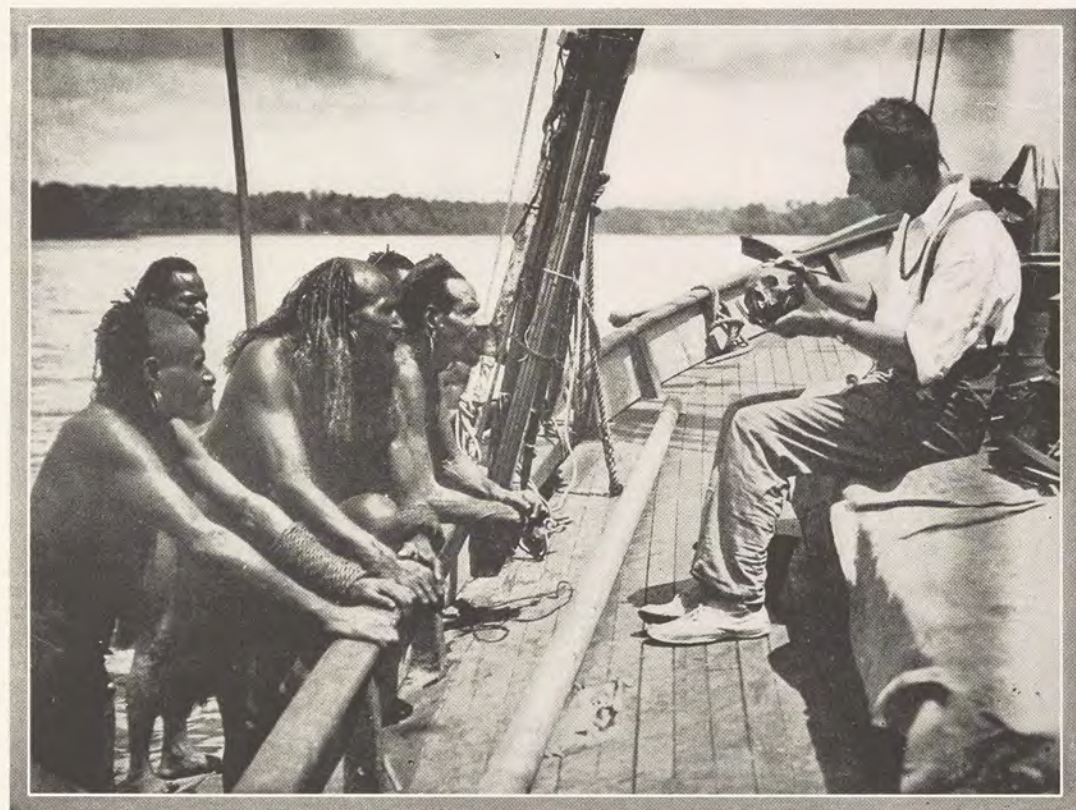
From a dim alcove I gave a yell of delight! We had discovered treasures beyond bonanza! Human heads! Stuffed heads! What luck!

Skulls painted and decorated had grinned from every niche, but heads—stuffed heads! Glorious beyond words! Had we raided a bank and carried off the bullion we could scarcely have been more pleased than with such desirable objects.

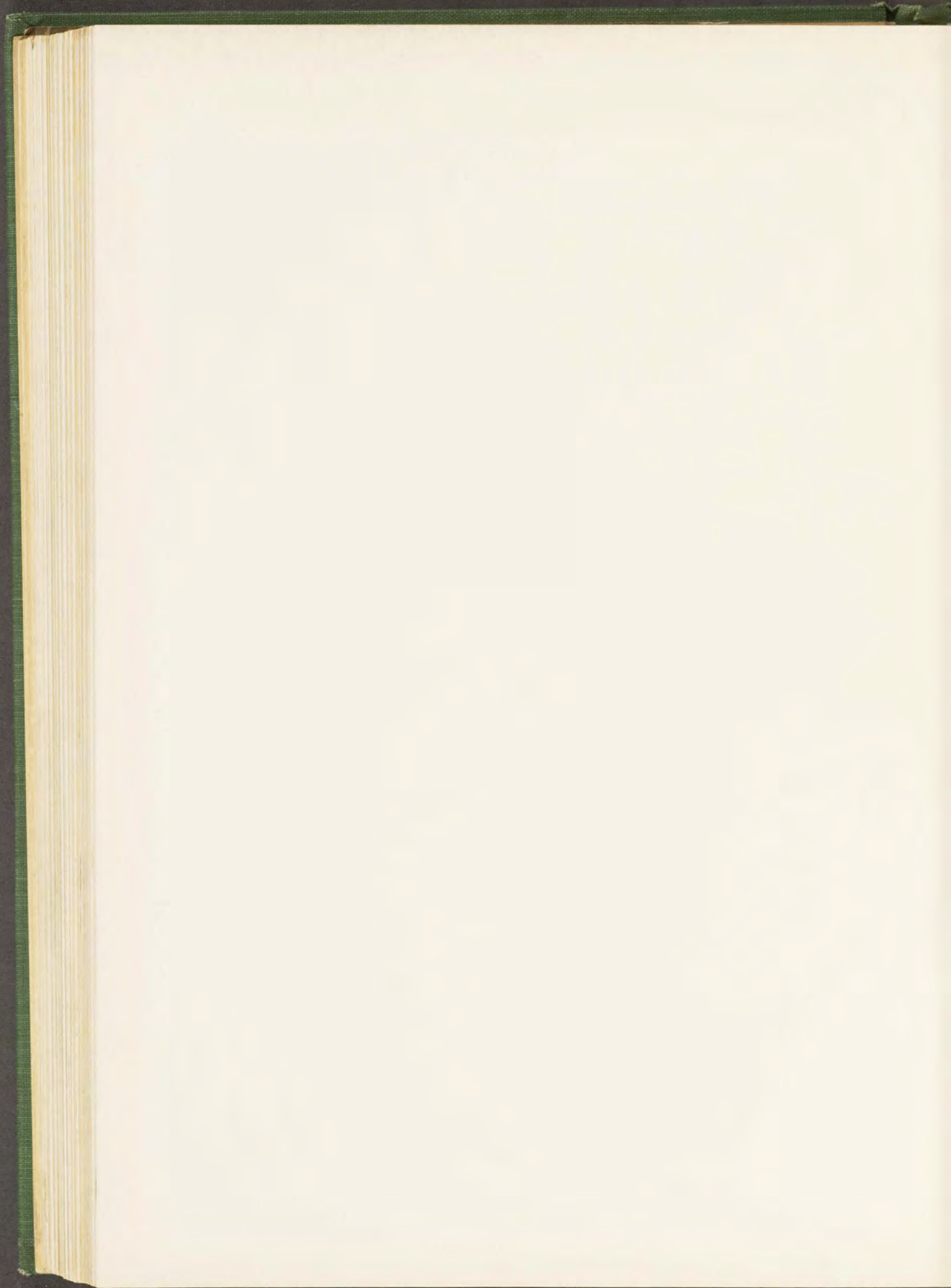
This is, of course, scientifically speaking, for I can scarcely conceive anything so gruesome as these hideous human trophies of the head-hunters. The heads had been severed from the victims, preserving the neck as long as possible;



THE SAVAGES OF LAKE MURRAY HAVE THEIR FIRST GLIMPSE AT A WHITE MAN. THE PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN FROM THE DECKS OF THE *Eureka* AS THE SAMBIO WARRIORS CAME ALONGSIDE



MCCULLOCH BARTERING EMPTY TOMATO CANS FOR SKULLS AND ARROWS WITH HAMOJI AND HIS WARRIORS.



MEN OUT OF THE STONE AGE

the skin had been slit up the back of the neck to the cranium, and the brain and all fleshy parts extracted by mascerating in water and scraping with a bamboo knife. The skin had been replaced on the skull and stuffed with coconut fibre. The native taxidermist then sewed it up at the back. The stuffing process distorted the face longitudinally, whilst the mouth which was forced open excessively was stopped with a ball of clay. The eyes were likewise treated and decorated with red seeds. The whole gruesome object had evidently been subjected to a lengthy smoke-curing process which mummified it and stopped decay. Finally the trophy was decorated with Iconic designs executed in red and yellow ochre and a large seed was found in the brain cavity—which evidently caused much grim amusement when shaken as a rattle during their death dances.

I have never seen objects more ghastly and horrible than these grim trophies.

What sort of people could these be that so callously made toys of their victims? Infinitely barbarous, ferocious, and cruel, with no feeling nor thought for human agony and suffering, and I shuddered to think of the ghastly scenes that had taken place in the small clearing by the gloomy bamboos.

3

Our friendly efforts to draw the natives from the jungle met with no success. The only signs of human life on the entire lake were great fires kindled at several remote points. Near at hand there was nothing. It was a deserted world—a world of the dead so far as the senses were concerned. There was something hair-raising and uncanny in the knowledge of countless eyes peering day and night from the thick jungle.

Discouraged at length, we turned out energies to exploring the lake in search of other villages and of the inlet which must

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lead still further into the interior. This region still remains unknown and uncharted; but one can be fairly certain that fresh water probably flows constantly into Lake Murray, for we found ample evidence of a current and the lake itself remains fairly clear of weeds and watergrowth, a condition which would not exist in a stagnant lake in tropic latitudes.

The water is really hot at the winter season, the temperature sometimes rising to ninety degrees which is not remarkable considering the fact that a tropic sun raises the temperature of the air during the daylight to something over one hundred degrees! The tepid waters are infested with great crocodiles which constantly swam about the ship at a safe distance and returned to mudbanks well out of range. We took many shots at them and the shooting, combined with the strange manœuvres of our craft and the chugging of the engine, no doubt filled the residents of the deserted dubu with apprehension.

Our short voyages of discovery led us constantly into scenes of the most fantastic beauty. The lake proved much larger than we had supposed in the beginning. Its extreme length must be at least fifteen or twenty miles with a width of four to five miles. The water, though hot, is remarkably pure, and save for occasional clumps of lotuses and reeds on areas of less than one fathom in depth, is clear and open. The banks are covered with long grass and reeds, which make the shore line appear deceptively close at hand. Investigation showed that these reeds grew far out into the lake sometimes in a fathom or more of water. It is virtually impossible to force a passage through this grass owing to the interlacing of the stems beneath the surface. For many hours we followed this fringe of shore looking for lagoon and inlets.

The course took us toward the western end of the lake amid scenery of indescribable beauty. Here the waters were

MEN OUT OF THE STONE AGE

virgin, never before entered by a white man. On every side there were emerald islets, generally with trees in the centre and the inevitable fringe of reeds and grass along the edge. Shady reaches like tunnels, arched over by trees and vines, opened up here and there along the shore leading into miniature ponds and lagoons where waterfowl arose in clouds at the approach of our boat.

Everywhere along the borders of the shore there appeared clumps covering acres of gigantic lotuses all in full blossom. The beautiful flowers flourished in the thick swamps at about two hundred feet from the open water, raising great crowns of waxen mauve and pink blossoms on slender stems from five to seven feet above the green slime. On our arrival at the lake we found it impossible to penetrate to the lotus clumps but, after several days, the level of the lake dropped considerably and there were spots where the water had receded enough to give us a firm footing. Forcing a track through the coarse, shoulder-deep marsh grasses, we came at last into an open field of these marvellous flowers. We wandered beneath huge, umbrella-like leaves in a veritable wonderland of blossoms. It only wanted the pixies sitting on the great leaves to make it a fairyland.

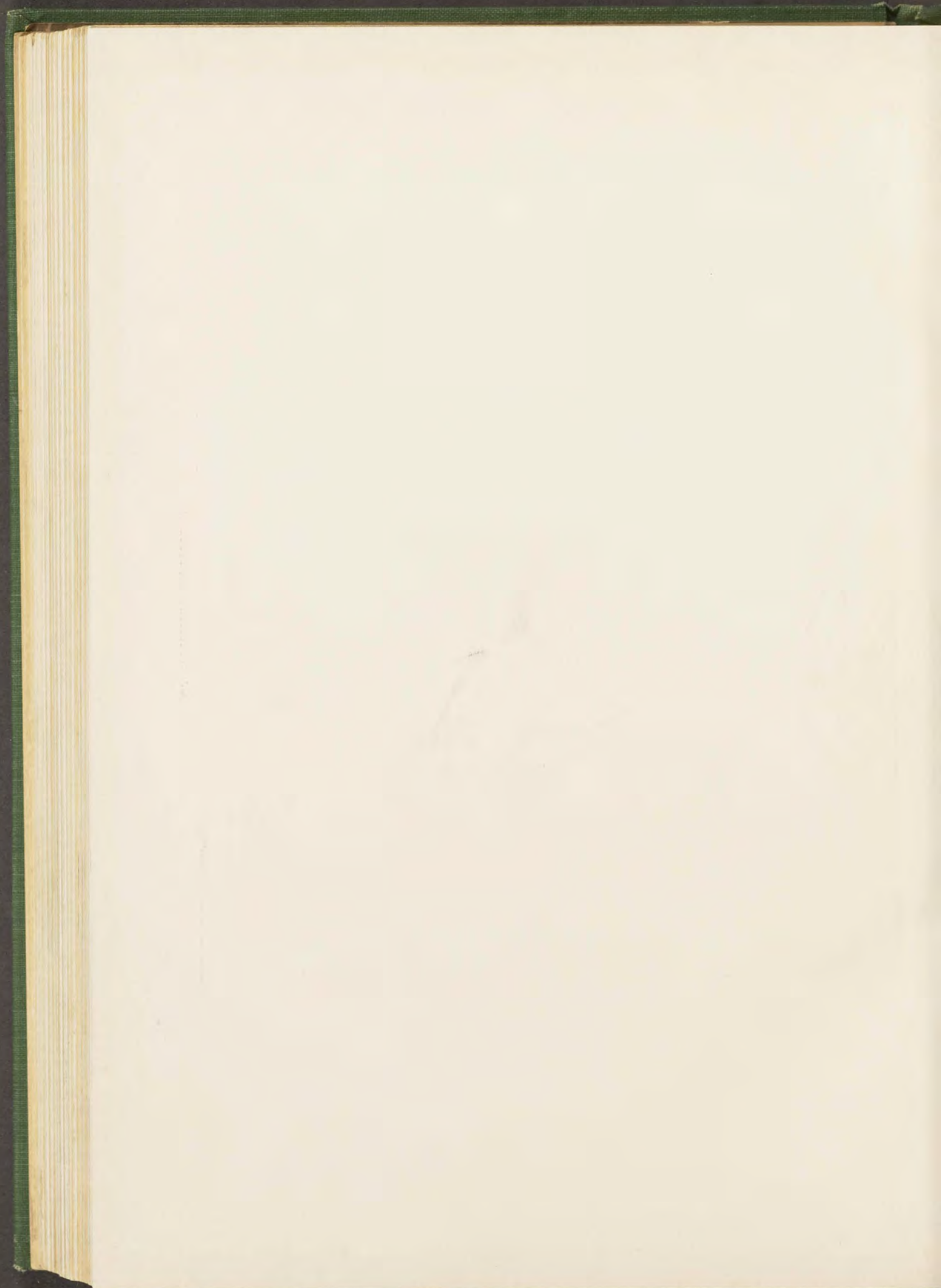
Nevertheless, it was hard going. The grass which grew in a luxuriant tangle, not only harassed our progress but cut us painfully. We found giant leaves that raised their pads eight to nine feet in the air and blossoms on stems from four to ten feet high. The flowers were in every stage from young buds to dried seed. Many were nearly a foot in diameter and of a bewildering beauty. The great buds, larger than both palms, varied from an infinitely delicate shell pink near the stem to a crimson at the "burst." The full blooms were pink with canary coloured centres surrounded by cream tipped anthers. These lovely blossoms have a sweet perfume which

This savage, who seemed infinitely more friendly than his companions, was induced to come aboard the *Eureka* and sit for his portrait. Later, when his companions saw that the strange machine of the white man did him no harm, several others permitted themselves to be photographed.

As a reward for sitting, McCulloch developed the negative and showed a print of it to the savage when he came out to the boat on the following day. For a long time the head-hunter gazed at it in a puzzled wonder and it was not until McCulloch turned the print upside down that a gleam of recognition appeared in the eyes of the savage. A moment later his face was wreathed by an astonished grin. He appeared unique among his fellows by the possession of a sense of humour curiously akin to our own.



THE MOST GENIAL OF THE LAKE MURRAY CANNIBALS IS INITIATED INTO THE WONDERS OF PHOTOGRAPHY BY McCULLOCH
OF THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM



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they exhale strongly at sundown. But the heat of the great swamp was quite unbearable. The rising vapours and the terrible humidity sapped all one's vitality and energy, and after an hour we had to beat a retreat thoroughly overcome.

By sounding the water steadily we discovered a channel which led us to a beautiful lagoon opening out from a creek which showed at its mouth a depth of two fathoms. Here we lowered the dinghy, and properly armed, McCulloch and I set out to ascertain its origin. We found a narrow clear waterway kept open by a slow current with a wide expanse on either side overgrown with grass and reeds. Among the grasses the beautiful azolla covered the surface. McCulloch secured a great variety of the dazzling dragonflies which skim the lake in millions and I secured a brace of ducks from among the flocks alarmed by our advance.

As night came on we reluctantly abandoned the beautiful canal and returned to the ship. The lake still remained an enchanted lagoon of the dead. Save for the ghostly, nocturnal fires glowing here and there at remote points, there was no sign of life. The western end of the lake appeared to be free of mosquitoes, probably because the larvæ were eaten by the hungry shoals of fish (toxotes) which haunt the lagoons and by the bladderwort (a marine growth which feeds upon larvæ and microscopic life). We found the tiny plant traps filled with mosquito larvæ.

After nightfall, Dogodo reported having seen a "firestick" ashore. Though these native boys are great alarmists, I took no chances and fired several shots. The phenomenal echo in the breathless quiet of the tropic night produced an alarming noise. The sound, thrown back from each bay, reverberated more like a volley than a single shot, and died away at last with a roll like distant thunder.

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4

The shore line of the lake proved as variable in character as the dialects and the physique of the New Guinea natives, and that to put it mildly implies a high degree of variability. To a scientist interested in inherited traits of character and physique, this virgin wilderness offers a fascinating field. Conditions of the primitive life have reacted to produce hundreds of racial offshoots. Where each tribe for centuries has been at war with its neighbours, where every village is an armed citadel on the lookout for an attack, there is small chance of intermarriage and consequent blending of characteristics. This condition once existed throughout New Guinea and it still exists deep in the interior. For this reason the finding of a new tribe or a new village leads inevitably to the most fascinating discoveries in customs, manner of life and physical characteristics. We lingered at Lake Murray hoping that the invisible savages would at last meet our friendly overtures and come into the open. Meanwhile the explorations continued.

As we moved on about the lake, we discovered at one spot banks thirty feet above the water which were covered with comparatively short, open grass. Farther on we came upon a wonderful reach of water which surpassed in beauty all we had encountered on the entire voyage. The surroundings resembled more closely those of a charming artificial lake laid out with green banks, inlets and rolling parks, than the casual work of nature. One could not but regret that all this exceeding beauty should be absolute waste. If such a resort existed within the reaches of civilization it would be world famous. The thousand and one tiny bays and mysterious lagoons, the tiny waterways which led away to enchanted glades, the heavily verdant points and headlands—all this, glorified by

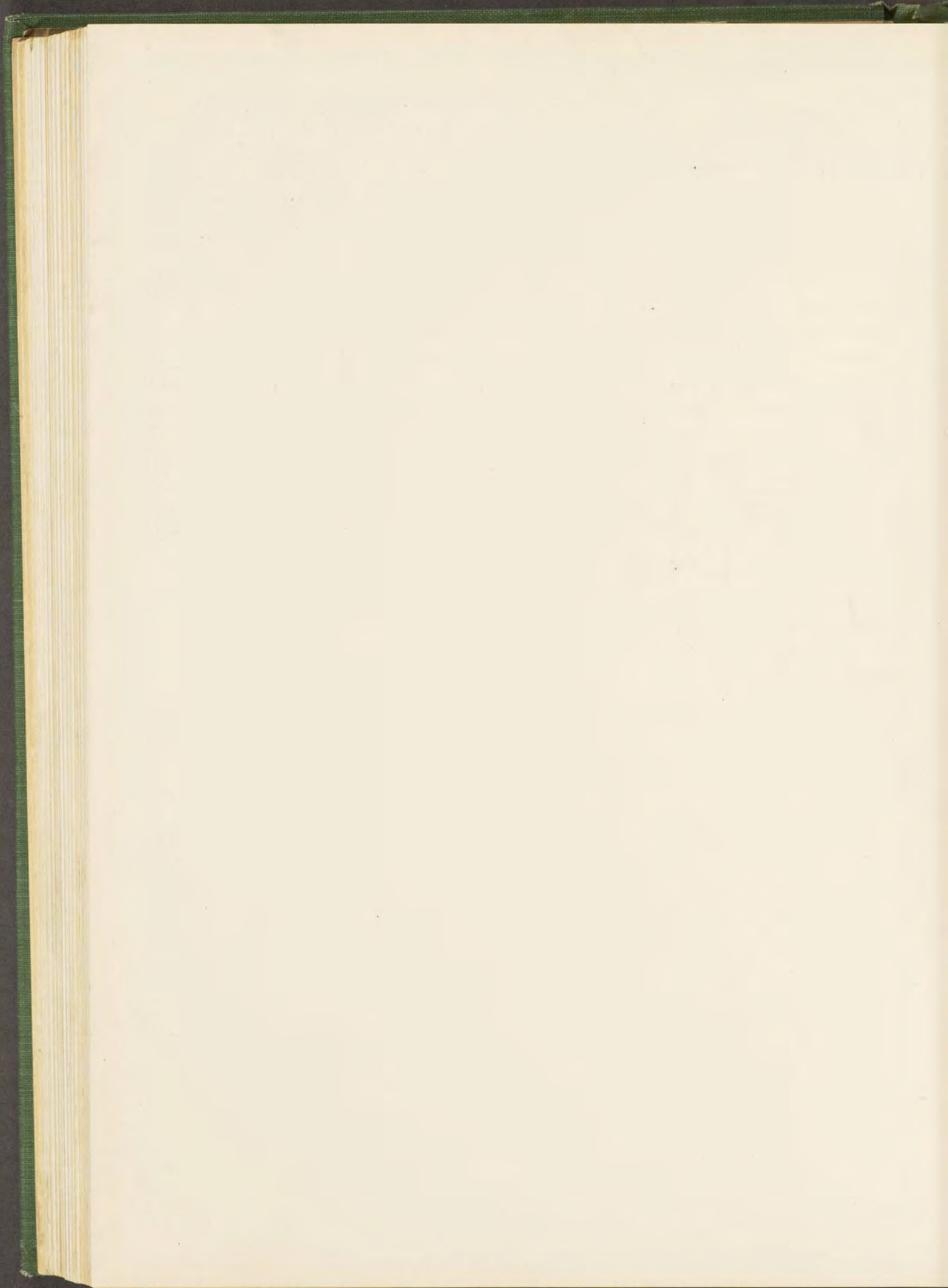
MEN OUT OF THE STONE AGE

the gentle beams of the setting sun, held one mute with admiration. In this outcast spot, it was a sad waste of beauty.

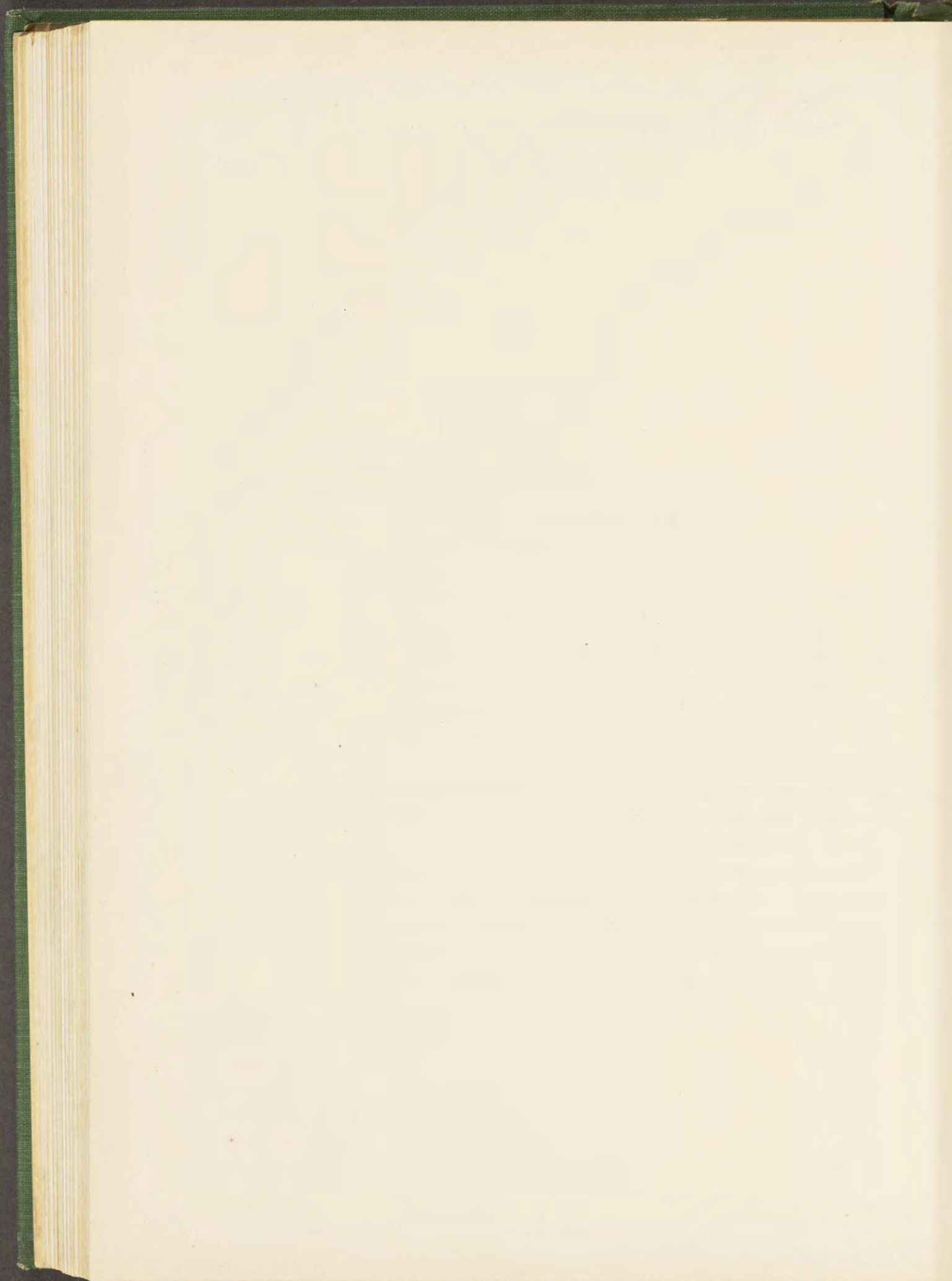
The night in this paradise brought from the dark silhouette of the banks the strange sounds of myriads of frogs. The sound resembled more closely the chattering of flying foxes than the familiar croak, croak of our own frogs. From far down the reach rises the eerie cry of the hornbill. The curlew joins in and the quiet waters are disturbed by the "plop" of jumping fish and the lapping of wavelets among the reeds. Now and then a flash of lightning illuminated the scene, enabling us to keep watch over the water for canoes. But the natives, it appeared, were too frightened. There was no sign of them.

5

Two days later when dawn came up, we found ourselves anchored close to a village. In the dusk of the evening before, it had been so well camouflaged as to deceive even the powerful binoculars. For the sake of security and a means of escape, if necessary, we sailed close to the shore and there launched the dinghy.



CHAPTER XIV
SAMBIO!! SAMBIO!!



CHAPTER XIV

1

ON the shores we found footprints and fresh fish scales; indeed, every evidence of recent occupation. As in the case of the earlier village, the place was utterly deserted. Two canoes were discovered hidden in the grass and we felt that we were being observed. Accordingly we loaded the rifles and crept forward, wary of the concealed pits and traps that might have been dug in the pathway. These traps are a favourite method of defense among the head-hunters. They are dug in the main paths leading to the villages, arrows are placed upright in the bottom to impale the luckless wretch who stumbles into them, and then the whole is concealed so artfully that only the most practiced eye could detect their peril.

It must not be thought that we were fear-stricken or panicky; but with a party including only one other white man (McCulloch) and four very unreliable natives likely to decamp at the first sign of fight, it was necessary to take every possible precaution. The rifle, when beyond arrow range, could hold off a whole army of head-hunters; but ashore, with perhaps a hundred deadly bowmen to fight at close quarters, the contest would have been against us. Accordingly we carried our rifles at the ready and advanced on the village.

Evidently it had been struck recently by a "Guba" (a

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heavy wind common in these latitudes during the northwest season) and virtually demolished. The bananas and sugar cane in the small garden were well-tended, so that it was evident that frequent visits had been made to this spot. As we were leaving we discovered another village close by and set out to visit it.

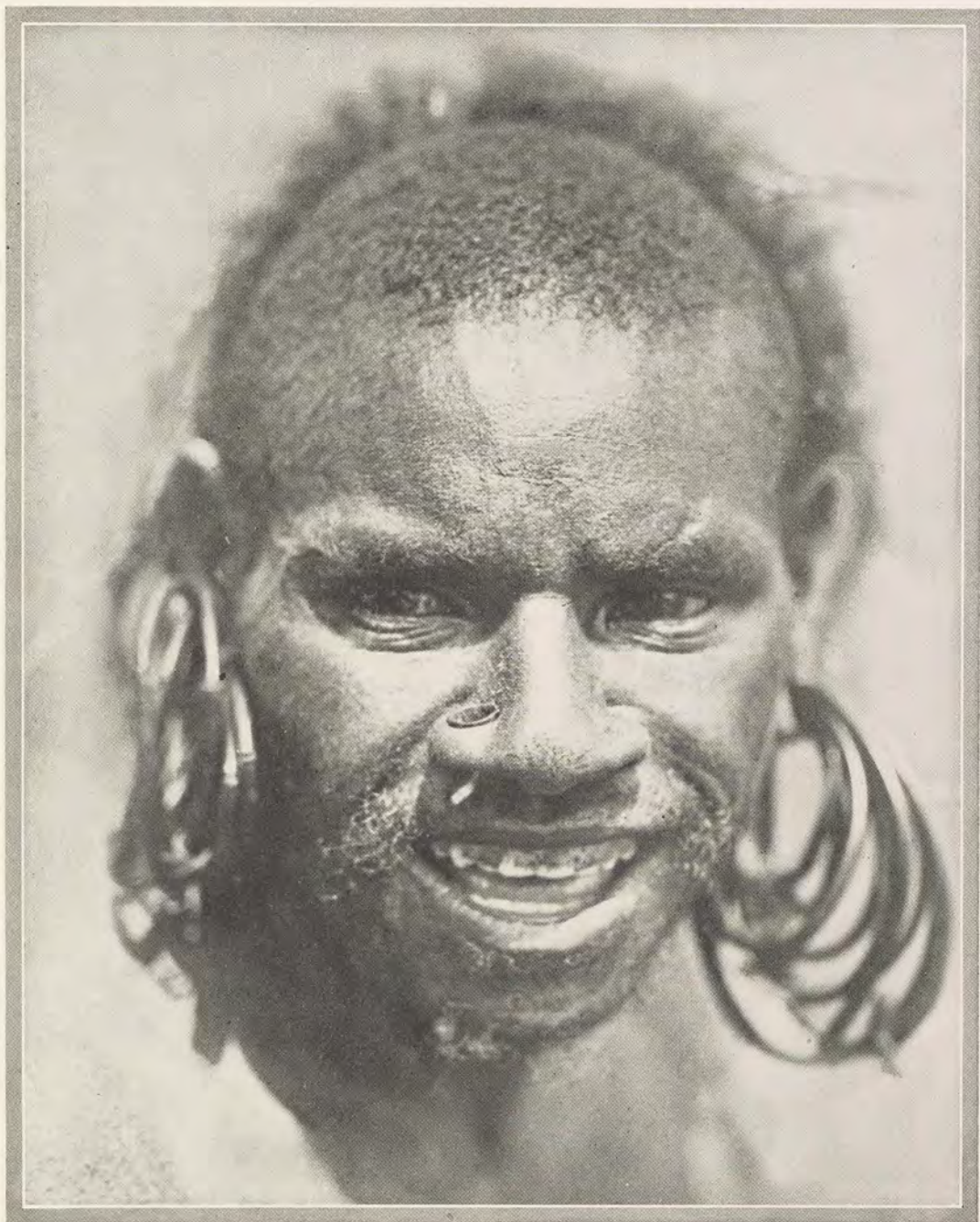
Taking the *Eureka* close inshore and landing, we discovered many fresh tracks and doubted not that the people were within bow shot in the jungle behind. The tracks led up a rise through thick grass and would have made an ideal site for an ambush. Gaining the top, we found there three houses—one a large house, another used as a pig-pen and the third a small house inhabited evidently by the chief. The houses, excepting the pig-pen, were not visible from the lake. The flat on which they were built had been cleared and possessed a splendid outlook over the water, as well as an escape into the jungle behind—truly a magnificent vantage for a people in constant dread of enemies.

The large house measured but thirty-five by twenty feet. It was a miserable shelter and even more primitive than the dubu we visited a week earlier. It was clear that the inhabitants had left in a great hurry—perhaps when the rising dawn revealed our ship close at hand on the lake. The embers were still warm and the pigs were still in the pen. Very little of any value had been left—a few skulls, a bundle of poor quality arrows and a few stone axe heads.

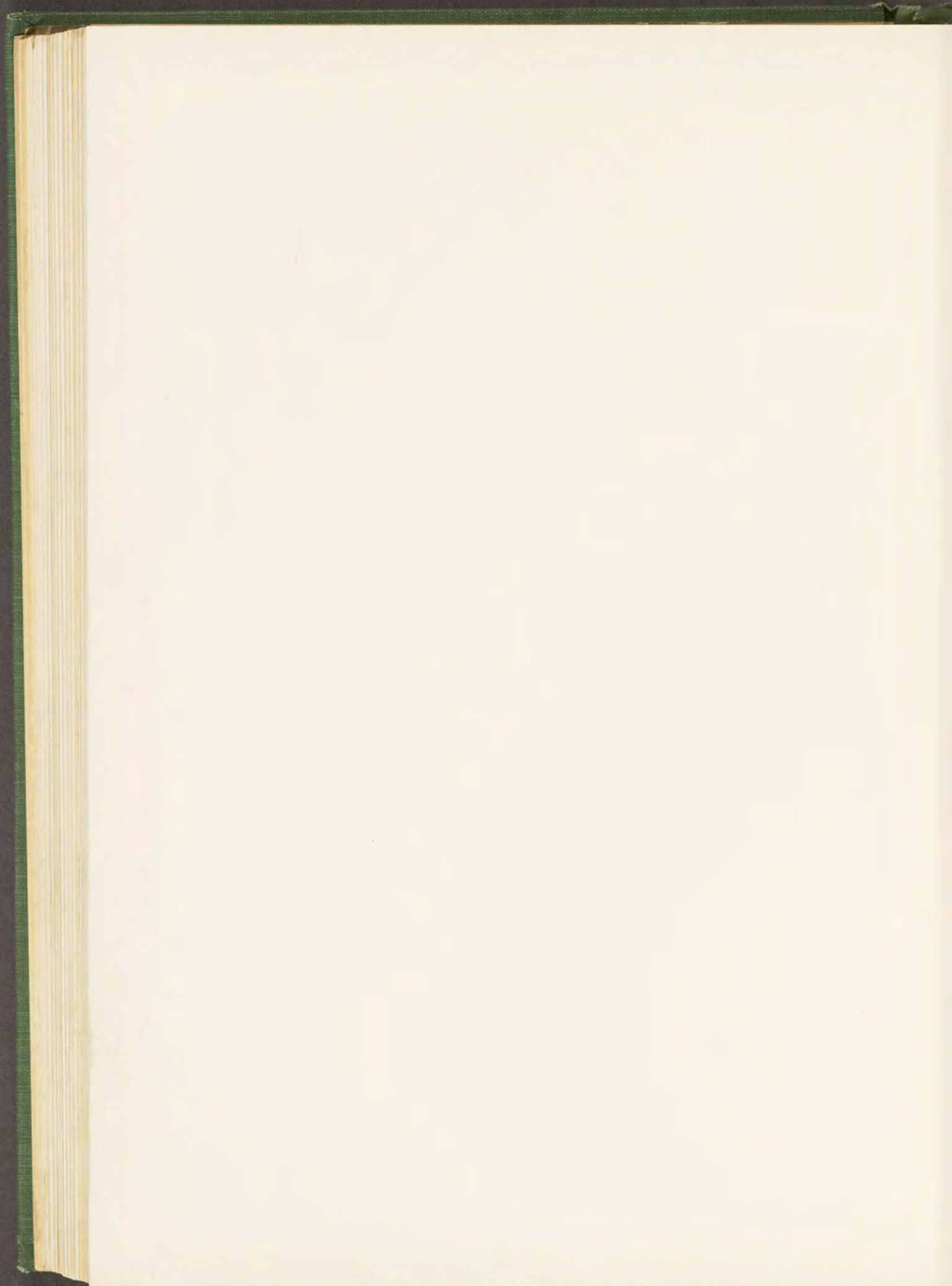
We left behind a few yards of gaudy coloured fabric and a couple of axes in the hope that the people might come back and be amicably disposed on our return visit.

2

In these uncharted waters, every precaution was necessary; so after we had heaved anchor and turned our course



A STONE AGE MAN SEES HIMSELF FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE LENS OF A CAMERA. THIS TYPE WAS ONE OF THOSE LURED ON BOARD THE *Eureka* TO SIT FOR HIS PHOTOGRAPH ONLY BY THE USE OF INDEFATIGABLE PATIENCE AND THE OFFER OF REWARDS. HE FACED THE CAMERA WITH TERROR AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL HE CAUGHT THE SUDDEN REFLECTION OF HIMSELF IN THE LENS THAT HE STOPPED FIDGETING AND FIXED HIS ATTENTION LONG ENOUGH TO PERMIT A SUCCESSFUL EXPOSURE



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back into the lake, I kept a strict look-out from a small platform built high on the mainmast. Scarcely had we progressed two miles when I noticed through the glasses a pair of canoes, one being paddled by eight men. The other seemed to be towed. The *Eureka* began rapidly to gain and I noticed the two canoes begin to draw apart. One appeared to be abandoned while the other rowed frantically for the bank so as to escape up one of the countless shallow reaches. As we drew close to the abandoned canoe, I observed it to be filled with stuffed heads, stone axes, bows, arrows, and all the sundries appertaining to the Lake Murray village. The *Eureka* was drawn alongside the prize and anchor cast.

Meanwhile I remained on the platform waving frantically a piece of yellow fabric which in "Daru days" had served as a quarantine flag, and calling out as loudly as I could the word, "Sambio! Sambio!" After much deliberation the canoe began to row slowly toward us, while both the paddlers and myself continued to shout, "Sambio! Sambio!" to reassure each other.

I admired the prowess of these men immensely. They put down their bows and arrows and approached us, knowing neither their fate nor our intentions, but relying solely upon the honour of that magic word, "Sambio!" Perhaps they were just as eager to ascertain what sort of creatures we were as we were eager to see them. Perhaps the tales of the white man and his implements of steel were lures worth risking even life. How strange! We keenly desirous of securing their primitive weapons and they anxious to possess the products of modern civilization!

The strange people when they came alongside fulfilled all the grotesque and fanciful ideas we had formed of them. Truly indeed they were prehistoric creatures—practically nude, covered by the hideous sipuma skin, and having the

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most amazing features. Their voices, strange to say, were pleasantly euphonious and comparable to the mountain folk of Maifulu and Ononghe, whom I consider the most musical of all the Papuan tribes. The canoe impressed me greatly. It was shaped with a long "clipper" taper, bow and stern finely excavated, and devoid of outrigger. One measured no less than fifty-five feet! The rowers stood erect and paddled their craft with very long paddles, the shafts of which terminated in large flat blades. The work of making these paddles from a solid piece of timber with only adzes of stone must be laborious and lengthy.

The cast of features of these people is amazingly Hebraic. Indeed, were it not for the deep bronze of their skins, they might have passed for one of the Lost Tribes. They coincided accurately with historians' description of the lost tribes of Israel and might well pass for bronzed Babylonian Jews. The hair is shorn off close in the front; but the back extends in a long cluster of luxuriant pigtails which are increased in length by plaiting them with fibre.

Speedily we made friends, or rather appeared to, with these people and began active trading. I demonstrated the power of the rifle and its accuracy. At the report most of them jumped overboard in terror. What astonished them more than the actual report or the carrying distance of the bullet was the echo. It reverberated for fully thirty seconds and it was clear that they thought it was the shot still traveling. Matches, the taste of salt and of sugar, alike astonished and pleased them; but what they clamoured for were the empty tins which we had saved for the purpose—empty oil and benzine tins. These primitive folk are entirely destitute of utensils of any description beyond bamboo and a few water baskets made by folding the sheath of the Goru palm.

For a few tins we purchased a bundle of arrows, while the



A FINE COLLECTION OF CRUEL ARROWHEADS MADE BY THE SAVAGE PEOPLES OF THE LAKE MURRAY SWAMPS. THE INGENUITY OF THESE HEAD-HUNTERS, SO STERILE IN THE ORDINARY PATHS OF LIFE, APPEARS TO HAVE EXPENDED ITSELF LARGELY IN METHODS OF STUFFING AND ORNAMENTS HUMAN HEADS AND IN DEVISING SUCH HORRIBLE WEAPONS AS THESE. THE ONLY MATERIALS AT HAND ARE PORCUPINE QUILLS AND CASSOWARY BONES, YET FROM THESE THEY HAVE DEVISED ARROWHEADS WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING THE MOST APPALLING WOUNDS. ANYTHING MORE HORRIBLE THAN THE FOURTH AND SEVENTH SPECIMENS ON THIS PAGE IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE



SAMBIO!! SAMBIO!!

same currency bought paddles, stone clubs and other implements. They were also eager to secure axes and knives which we exchanged, securing great value for our tools. After trading profitably and to our advantage and their satisfaction, they directed us with great zeal to their village. On this trip we took the canoe in tow, an event which caused among the paddlers the greatest hilarity and delight. All the way they jabbered among themselves in their unknown dialect.

3

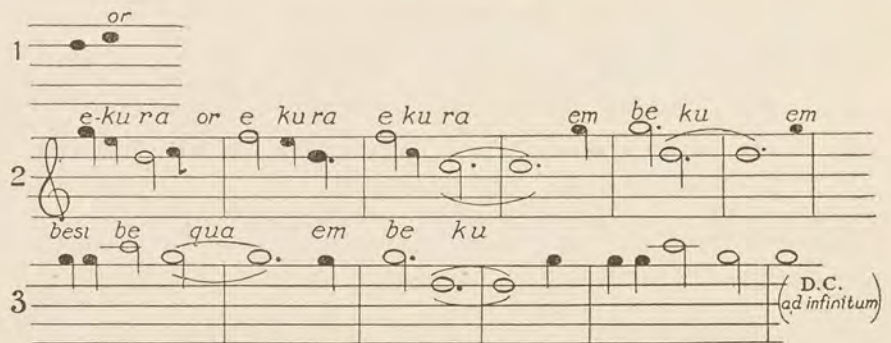
The village (reminiscent of Bairnsfather) comprised a large, flat-roofed house about one hundred feet long and thirty-five feet wide. It appeared identical to that discovered a week ago, except that the big house was open at each end and had no small entrances from the outside. It is interesting to observe that throughout all Papua there are seldom two villages in which the customs and the architectural features are precisely the same.

Our new friends pressed us warmly with much jabbering and animated pantomime to go ashore, and at length I yielded and with McCulloch and four natives set out in the dinghy.

We found the foreshores heavily overgrown with waterweeds and reeds, difficult to force the dinghy into and still more difficult to push out of in case of attack. I noted carefully that our friends were hysterically excited and I sensed trouble. A dozen over-willing hands rushed out to haul the dinghy up high and dry, in which case we would have been completely helpless in case of attack. I accordingly waved them back and made for another point where there was a clear landing and an easy get-away could be effected in case of attack. I hailed Bell to bring the vessel in as close as possible to cover us with weapons in case of danger. We landed to a wild song

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and dance to which the warriors beat time on drums and benzine tins, while others shook violently stuffed human heads which emitted a not unpleasant rattling. McCulloch recorded the song which was something like



4

There were some fifty warriors but to my consternation neither women nor children. This is ever an ominous sign and presages trouble. As we loitered on the foreshore the chief seemed to sense the reason for my hesitancy and motioned the warriors away. As they departed into the jungle immediately behind the village, I noticed them snatch up bows and arrows from the concealment of the grass. With rifles at the ready we followed the chief in single file along a narrow track towards the house. McCulloch drew my attention to numbers of arrows half concealed in the grass which had been pushed into the ground with the point directed to the house. In the event of a retreat through the grass one must inevitably become impaled on the terrible points. We were now on the threshold of the house which I observed was precisely similar to those visited previously but larger.

The chief motioned us to enter but I felt that he was a decoy to entice us into the trap. My native bodyguard

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warned me against this ruse saying that it was one used by their fathers. Once inside the darkness of the Dubu, a signal would have brought the warriors from their concealment, we would have been surrounded and clubbed to death.

One thinks quickly in these times, for only twenty yards away I knew fifty bowmen were excitedly waiting the signal. We could hear their suppressed whispers coming from the jungle. It was some hundred paces back to the dinghy which latter was fortunately just beyond arrow range. The retreat would have to be made diplomatically and so as not to arouse suspicion.

I pointed to three fine specimens of stuffed human heads and in the language of signs, which these people understood perfectly, intimated that I wanted them and would pay six steel axes therefor. Six axes! Steel axes! I noticed the Hebraic shrewdness for a bargain sparkle in his eyes. Such a bargain could not be refused. I also intimated by signs that we would return after the axes were brought from the vessel. So he was going to get six axes in addition to six heads! The shrewd old man called something back to his followers and carried the heads back along the track to the dinghy. He would wait on the foreshore for our return which I indicated would be immediately.

So heartily thankful for once, that even the savage breast can know that most repulsive of all traits—greed, we clambered aboard and Bell started up the engine and we headed out into the stream. The old man saw he was outwitted and shaking a bundle of arrows defiantly, hurled back in contemptuous breath the words "Sambio! Sambio!"

The escape, I am convinced, was a narrow one and a sound lesson. From then on we decided not to land but to do our work from the vessel. This was, in fact, the only safe course remaining. The only means of landing involved some way

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of terrifying the people and this I had no desire to do. As if nothing had happened, the canoes put off from the shore the next morning and paid us a visit. I paid over the axes and this served to inspire confidence and to renew the friendship.

The manner in which they regarded us is as excusable as our curiosity toward them. They were much puzzled by our whiteness, by the medio-colour of our half-caste engine room assistant, the dark bronze of the others, and by the almost black of Ironi who came from one of the Kaimari villages. During their visit alongside Bell happened to have been shaving and this process roused the greatest interest. In some way they associated the white lather with the whiteness of our skin and by pantomime begged to examine the soap-suds. Bell placed a large quantity in the hands of one of the savage paddlers who tasted it, got it into his eyes (a thing which caused him to rub them violently) and rubbed it over his skin, expecting clearly that it would have the magic effect of turning him white.

Vaieki, who has the astuteness and cunning of a true cannibal, informed me that he had seen the natives in conversation and that the ruse of friendliness was to be displayed when we went ashore. After that they would lure us to the big house and kill the party. But the best laid plans of mice and cannibals "gang aft agley."

5

As evening drew near, we sailed well away from the village and anchored in safer waters. But the day was destined to be a conspicuous one from every point of view. As darkness fell, heavy clouds rolled up from the south-east and storm began. At first there arose over breathless lake only the sound of a vague and gigantic rumbling which came for a long way off. We had only time to make things fast, secure



McCULLOCH SURROUNDED BY THE GRUESOME SOUVENIRS LEFT BEHIND BY SAMBIO WARRIORS WHEN THEY ABANDONED THEIR CANOE IN TERROR AT THE NOISY CHUG-CHUG OF THE PURSUING *Eureka*. UNLIKE THE NATIVES OF THE COAST COUNTRY WHO KEEP THE BARE SKULLS OF THEIR ENEMIES, THE SAMBIO PEOPLE PUT THE HEADS THROUGH A TANNING AND STUFFING PROCESS WHICH PRODUCES AN EFFECT INFINITELY MORE HORRIBLE.



SAMBIO!! SAMBIO!!

the hatches, awnings, and drop anchor before the tornado rushed upon us and broke with wild fury. The wind rose to hurricane force and the rain fell in a terrific burst. The wild outburst lasted but fifteen minutes, but the rain continued without abating for three hours longer. The redeeming feature was that the flying parasites were cleared away and there was a welcome drop in temperature. A strict watch was maintained throughout the night, but the weather was our best watch-dog and we were left untroubled.

It appeared that the curiosity of our savage friends was beyond control, for at sunrise there appeared coming toward us over the still water of the lake a pair of canoes with our friends of the day before well in the lead. It was extremely brave of these men; they came entirely unarmed and without any knowledge of the character of the people they were dealing with. We exchanged with them the eternal, "Sambio!" and reassured each other again of our friendly inclinations. Other canoes remained inshore at some distance, probably as reinforcements and to see what happened to their emissaries. We treated them in a friendly fashion and soon the balance of the fleet joined their braver fellows. I noticed that these people were practically without weapons of defense, having left them ashore. Certainly I could not imagine our party going unarmed into a camp where relations were doubtful. So the more is my esteem for these people, no matter what may have been the ultimate sinister motives of their approach.

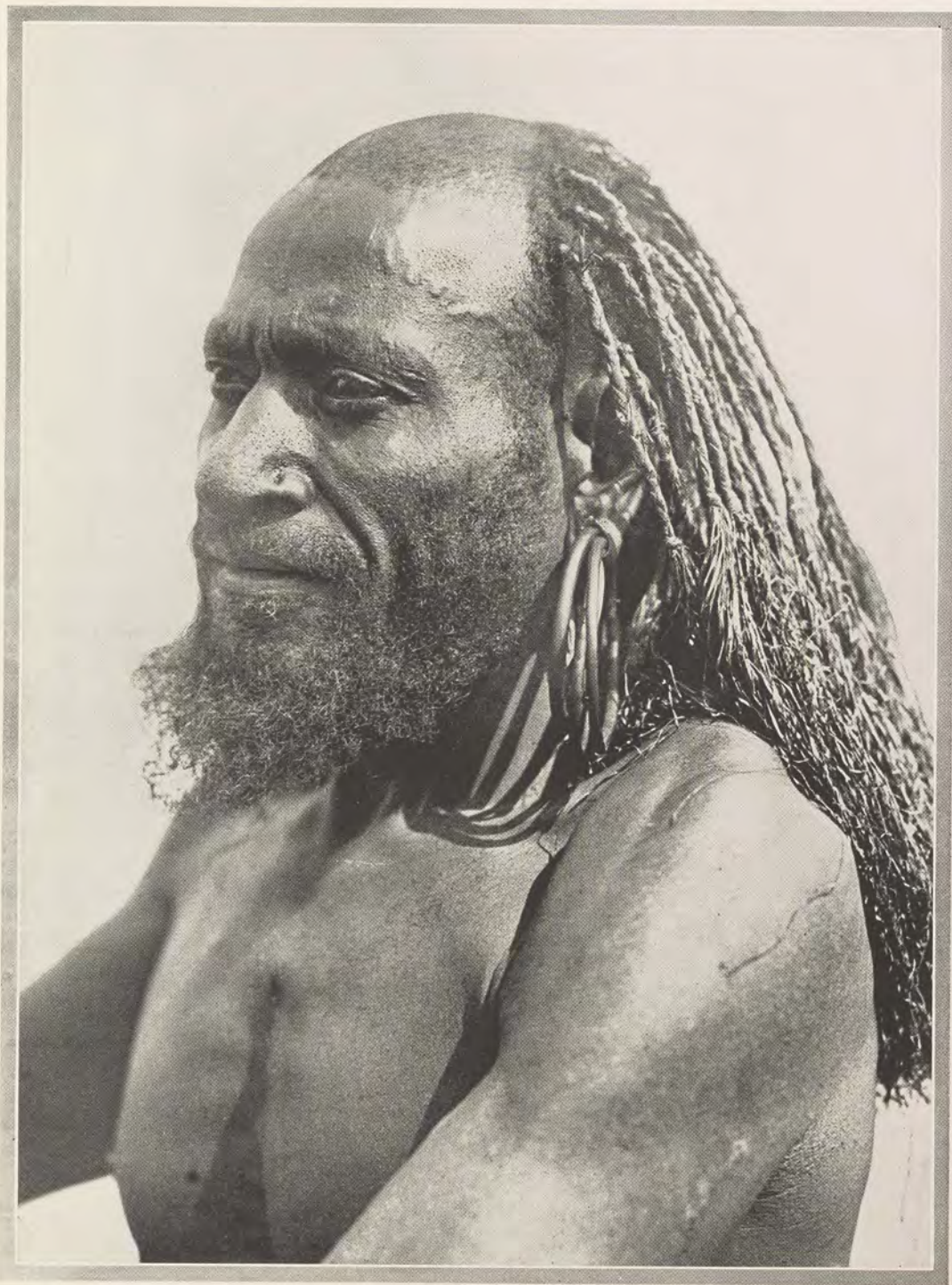
I lost no time in getting busy with my camera and made the limit of my opportunity. We rigged up a blanket for a background and induced, after great coaxing and persuasion, one of the party to come aboard and "pose." I couldn't blame the poor chap for having appeared nervously brave, and for wanting constantly to peer behind him and see what was going on behind the blanket. I could well imagine my

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own feeling if in their village a barrier had been placed behind me and I had been coaxed to sit before it while suspicious characters with deadly weapons moved about behind the screen. Then I found it almost impossible for him to keep still. He was unusually fidgety and not at all an easy subject. Presently the sitter noticed his reflection in the lens, and became alarmed. Again it required many "sambios" and much pantomime to reassure him. Eventually McCulloch brought out a few paper prints and I also allowed the native to view his fellows through the reflex camera. This seemed to kindle an unimaginative intelligence, and as soon as it became clear to him what I wanted, I was able to secure an exposure.

As there were many diverse types, I kept our decoy on board to reassure the others, and presently I induced the various subjects one by one to come and sit for me. But they were all very nervous and I was forced to make quick exposures.

Most of them were of a markedly Semitic type of countenance, while others resembled early Egyptians, an impression imparted doubtless by the strange manner of dressing the hair. The chief was decidedly an aristocratic and kingly type; with his crown of paradise plumes he might well have passed for a reincarnation of Solomon. Then there was Shylock, typified; and to judge from his voracious expression he would require more than a mere pound of flesh. There were several other very pleasant characters with whom we could have won lasting and trusting friendships, but the sly and guarded nudges and the savage expressions of several elders made me very, very cautious. Even though these people had no weapons, they could easily have leapt on board and overpowered us had we relaxed our vigilance for an instant. Our strength lay in the range of our rifles and our capacity for keeping our callers at a distance.



HAMOJI, THE CHIEF, WITHOUT HIS CROWN OF PARADISE PLUMES. THIS FINE SPECIMEN OF A PRIMITIVE MAN HAD THE DIGNITY OF A EUROPEAN AMBASSADOR AND TOOK PERSONAL CHARGE OF THE BAR-TERING OF STUFFED HEADS AND OTHER MUSEUM MATERIAL IN EXCHANGE FOR STEEL AXES, EMPTY BENZINE TINS AND TIN CANS WHICH ONCE HAD HELD TOMATOES AND SARDINES



SAMBIO!! SAMBIO!!

All that one might fancy of the grotesque and fearful was realized in these strange and primitive creatures. Albeit they were Semitic in feature—from our point of view they were not when it came to trading. Jam and milk tins bought bundles of arrows and paddles and other things. What we would have cast away, was to them of inestimable value. We had saved all our empties for this purpose, and so our trading was profitable. The tin of tomatoes, with its two-penny worthy of fruit and three-penny tin, proved after all a profitable investment. Now the empty tin brought us what was worth pounds!

After I had secured my types in the safety of midstream, I turned my attention to the village. So as to observe their movements, I permitted the canoes a good start and then heaved anchor and followed. I noticed that they paddled in very close to the river bank and occasionally snatched bundles from the reeds. These I discovered were bundles of arrows which they had hidden, an act altogether excusable as a precaution of defense.

The canoes were slow as compared with those of the Delta. Nor were the paddlers as expert as the Delta people. At five knots we easily gained on and passed them, arriving well in advance. The vessel was headed close inshore and allowed to drift while I secured pictures from the deck. The men still remaining in the village cried loudly, "Sambio! Sambio!", and the dogs set up a blood-curdling yell that sounded like anything but a welcome. By this time the canoes had come up and their occupants joined in the universal cry of "Sambio!"

Then on the shore they began a fantastic song and dance to the accompaniment of a large drum and a half-score of benzine tins, which they seemed to find more suitable as drums than as kitchen utensils.

This jollity continued most of the day. When at last we

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drew away and headed for the middle of the lake, the sound of the drums and the magic benzine tins grew fainter and fainter as the village of Dukoif dropped behind, losing itself slowly from view in a tangle of jungle trees and vines. Even after the sound of the drums died away the cry, "Sambio! Sambio!" rang in my ears. So my hopes were realized, I had seen the people of the fabled lake whom I had travelled nearly two thousand miles to see. The realization was a supreme satisfaction and accomplishment. This was the first time that white men had ever sailed these reaches; the first time white men had ever seen these people, and the first time that these people had ever seen white men.

The following day we continued homeward across the lake which in the stillness of a supreme day was like a plate of burnished silver, more dazzling and beautiful than we had seen it before. The purling of the waters from our bows sang sweetly of home, yet as I gazed over the expanse of this peaceful scene a great sadness filled my mind. I was turning back to civilization and all this would soon be but a dream, another visionary picture in the gallery of memory.

In the late evening we reached the portal of the lake. Our ambitions were realized and our labours done. The silhouette of a deserted village seemed to add to the loneliness. The sun was passing down beyond the trees of the far off shore and an ineffable calm like a soothing sleep fell over the world. The birds were coming home and the lotus flowers exhaled their evening fragrance. From the distant reeds a solitary figure paddled out in a canoe, faintly calling across the waters "Sambio! Sambio!"—"Peace! Peace!"

THE END



